
INTERESTING TALES.

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SELECTED AND TRANSLATED



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BY W. C. HARRIS

INTERESTING TALES

1830.

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OTHER TATES

INTERESTING TALES.

BIOGRAPHY OF A SPANIEL.



INTRODUCTION.

IN the midst of one of the large seas our astronomers have lately discovered in the moon, lies a large island, that, for ages innumerable, perhaps from the beginning of time, has been the appointed Elysium of dogs—those constant and faithful companions of man. There the serious Newfoundland dog, playful greyhound, choleric Pomeranian,

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and

and fawning spaniel, are united in the most fraternal affection; nor is the stupid Bolognese and indolent lap-dog excluded from the society of their brethren; for they, as well as the alderman and sop, are deprived of the assumed dignity of their stations, at the moment they lay aside their sublunary clothing.

Once, as a party of them were assembled on the flowery banks of their ocean, they perceived the shade of a new comer, gently wafted by a silver wave to a coral beach, at no great distance from them. They ran to receive and introduce him to the motley circle of his new friends, who congratulated him on his safe arrival to their blissful abode, and shewed the satisfaction they felt, by every demonstration of joy in the power of dogs to give. When they found he was entirely recovered from the fatigues of his passage, an

old dog, who seemed to be the president of the society, addressed him in the following terms:—"Brother! the laws of our republic oblige you to give an account of your terrestrial pilgrimage. Speak; we are impatient to hear the history of your life."

"My life," replied the stranger, wagging his tail, "is marked by several occurrences which prevent its being quite a commonplace one; and had I, whilst in the lower regions, possessed the power of speech as I do now, without doubt I should have found a biographer; nay, perhaps I deserve one better than many whose lives are published by subscription on writing-paper, adorned with an elegant frontispiece and title-page. Who can tell—but Fame might have immortalized my name, and that painters and poets would not have vied with each other to prevent its

sinking into oblivion? my resemblance might have been the admired ornament on ladies' fans, and my praise, set to music, have been sung at their harpsichords. However, not to be my own panegyrist, I must add, that my heroic deeds were often of such a nature, as to reflect but little honour on myself; but if my history is entertaining enough to amuse my new friends for half an hour, I shall not regret appearing in the character of the hero of a romance."

All the company stretched themselves round the stranger, impatient to hear a narration that promised them so much pleasure; and he, placing himself by the side of his friend, the president, related what I shall repeat after him.

"I was

“I was born in Germany, in the residence of a crowned philosopher, whose passion for tall soldiers and small dogs was universally known: my mother was the favourite of an honest shoe-maker, whose house she guarded. She belonged to the race of spaniels, whose blood was pure and uncontaminated; and as I was likewise a thorough-bred spaniel, I suppose my father to have been of the same specie. More is not in my power to say about him, for this part of my genealogy remains wrapped in eternal darkness; but I comfort myself with the reflection, that many of Adam’s descendants’ fate is similar to mine in this respect, and that the space which contains their names in the parish-register would have been a blank, if it had not been the fashion to fill it up with a name at random.

" My beautiful jetty coat attracted the attention of a grenadier, who was quartered in the house where I first drew breath ; he taking a fancy to me, offered to take me in exchange for a brass tobacco-box ; which proposal saved my life, for otherwise I should have shared the fate of my three brothers or sisters, who were drowned immediately after their birth. The first object that presented itself to me when I opened my eyes, was my mother : she was licking my face, and looking at me with the affectionate tenderness of a parent to her only child. Hitherto my existence had appeared to me like a confused dream, from which I was roused by the sight and caresses of my mother ; and I may with truth say, that the first sensations I felt were those of gratitude and pleasure. As I was the only nurfling my mother had, it is not surprising that I soon increased in size and strength,

strength, and that my sagacity, and gratitude to my kind parent, augmented daily. When I was a month old, I was weaned, and exchanged in a formal manner for the tobacco-box. My new master's name was Lafleur; he was a Frenchman, who, about twenty years before my birth, had quitted his regiment and native country without either asking for a furlough or passport. He called me Jolli, a name that, without vanity, I became every day more deserving of: he was kind and good to me, and his attentions, brown bread, and potatoes, soon made me forget, or at least cease to regret, the fondness of my mother, and the nutriment I received from her; nor did my friend, the shoe-maker, withdraw his hand entirely from me, for he would frequently throw me a gristle or small bone to exercise my teeth. Thus passed my infancy; but my youth was doomed to more

serious occupations.—I was disagreeably surprised one morning, by Monsieur Lafleur seizing me by the nape of my neck, and placing me erect against the wall: this posture, strange as well as troublesome, did not please me, and I endeavoured to remove from it, and regain my equilibrium; but my mentor knew how to pervert the laws of nature, for, with a stick he held ready for that purpose, he gave me a smart rap on my fore-paws, on each attempt I made to set them on the ground. But his corrections, instructions, and my abilities succeeded so well, that, when I had taken lessons about a week, I was able to set up against the wall as straight as an arrow. A paper grenadier's cap was next placed on my head, and I was taught to hold a stick on my shoulder, in imitation of a gun. Difficult as I found these manœuvres, they were but the beginning of my academic studies;

studies; for, no sooner had I acquired one art than I was forced to begin another; so that in about a year I was able to sit up in a graceful manner, seek for any thing that was dropped, dive, and jump over a stick for King Frederic. But at the end of my novitiate, I found the solid advantages that learning gives; for at every cook-shop and public-house I followed Monsieur Lafleur to, my talents (which I never failed exhibiting) were rewarded with such delicate morsels, as made me entirely forget the pain acquiring them had cost me;—nay, often when my master was in company with his comrades, would they good-naturedly divide their scanty portion of bread and cheese with me. In short, Jolli was caressed by every one; the whole neighbourhood knew him, and was loud in his praise.

“ I retained my celebrity almost a year: then indeed I began to sink into oblivion, being no longer able to excite the curiosity of the multitude. To remedy this evil, my artful master had formed the dreadful project of learning me some new tricks, when a lucky chance prevented him the trouble of teaching, and me the pain of learning them. There happened to be a fair kept in a village near our town, which was too favourable an opportunity of exhibiting my feats to let my master pass unnoticed: thither we therefore went; and the gaping country people gathered in crowds around us, delighted with my performance. But a more honourable conquest than mere admiration was reserved for me there; for my talents attracted the attention of a puppet-show man, who had erected his booth in the Market-place: he perceiving what a treasure I was, determined to add me

to

to his *marinetttes*, if he could prevail on my possessor to dispose of me. Monsieur Lafleur at first objected to do so; but the two ducats that were at last offered him were too great a temptation; they conquered his reluctance, and I was resigned to my new master. That very afternoon I served for the Bucephalus of a wooden Alexander, and, preceded by a drum and fife, was led in triumph through the village; every now and then my patron stopt, and informed the noble company, ‘In the evening, he should have the honour of exhibiting an entire new tragical and historical entertainment, which he did not doubt would meet with the approbation of all lovers of dramatic amusements, as it would far exceed every thing of the kind before attempted; and that, between the acts, the wonderful dog, just arrived, would perform some surprising tricks of agility.’

agility.'—After this pompous harangue, I was ordered to give a sample of what was to follow; which I did with so much dexterity, that the applause I met with was nearly as great as my rival rider's in his scarlet jacket and high-crowned hat.

"After staying a few days in this village, our apparatus was packed up, and we proceeded with slow marches to a small town on the frontiers of Bohemia; where our pantheon was again erected.

"There a disgraceful catastrophe awaited me; for, on the evening of our arrival, I was introduced on the stage, and my master, determined to let none of my talents remain concealed, holding up a stick, said, "Hey, Jolli! now jump for the Emperor." I, who had only been taught to jump for King
Frederic

Frederic and Monsieur Lafleur, and not knowing what sort of a creature an Emperor was, did not think it necessary to move at his name: my master repeated his command three different times; I remained unmoved, which seeming obstinacy put him in a passion, and the audience into a commotion,—which increased to an uproar, on a patriotic cobler's declaring my master an enemy to the state, and the whole affair meant as an insult to the Emperor. In consequence of this declaration he was dragged from the stage, kicked, and otherwise ill treated; and I, in all probability, should have been the victim of this political mistake, if I had not wisely embraced the opportunity of slipping through the back door during the confusion that reigned in the house. Had I liked my situation, I should have returned to the inn where my new master lodged; but, as I was not attached to him,

him, I rejoiced at the favourable opportunity of regaining my freedom. I therefore ran out of the town as fast as I could, and concealed myself in a field of wheat; where I knew I was in no danger of being discovered, had my master thought it worth while to pursue me.

“I remained safe in this asylum the whole night, but hunger forced me to leave it early the next morning. I ran zig zag, not knowing which way to take, till the sight of a village, that lay at some distance from the road, fixed my wavering resolution. Without the least ceremony I entered the first house I came to, which happened to be a public one; and you may judge how great my surprise and joy was, when I tell you, that the first object I discovered in the room was my old preceptor Lafleur: he was sitting at the

table

table with a glass of beer in his hand, relating to the landlord how he had contrived to desert from the Prussians. As soon as he saw me, the glass fell from his hand, and I jumped into his arms, which were opened to receive me ;—indeed, our joy was reciprocal ; for, whilst I licked his sun-burnt face, he fondly pressed me to his bosom, and called me his dear Jolli. The landlord and his wife not knowing what to make of the scene, looked at us with amazement ; which Lafleur explained to them, whilst I was devouring a hard crust of bread that lay on the table ;—they perceiving, by the voracity with which I did it, that I had kept fast for some time, gave me an excellent breakfast, which I still thank them for.

“ When we had finished our meal, Lafleur and I pursued our journey, and in two days arrived

arrived at Prague, where he again enlisted. His old instructions to me were repeated; and as he now wore a white coat, one of his first lessons was to make me jump over his stick for the Emperor. The name was too deeply imprinted on my memory to give me much trouble to retain it; and I learned this manœuvre with less difficulty than any of my former ones. My talents procured me plenty of food, and were a fund of profit to my master; and, as I was really attached to him, I should have been the happiest animal of my kind, if it had not been for the malice of his comrades, who envied him the possession of me, who they without reason hated and ill treated. Lafleur, moved by my unmerited sufferings, was determined, painful as the privation was to himself, to remove me to a distance from them, as soon as he could find an opportunity of placing me comfortably.

ably. He soon found one; for a nobleman, that lived in the country, came to Prague to seek a governor for his children; and, not being able to find one that would undertake the charge for the sixty florins a year he offered, determined at least not to return without a companion for them: his choice fell on me, whom he bought of my friend and master for six florins.

“ We arrived safely at his seat; and his right honourable consort and family were not a little surprised to see a dog jump out of the carriage instead of the grave professor they expected; but I believe I may with truth assert, that at least the children were not displeased at the exchange, particularly when their right honourable papa had given them incontestable proofs of my skill and learning.

“ Notwithstanding

“ Notwithstanding my plebeian extraction, I soon gained the affection of all the family, and they treated me in the same manner as if I had been the youngest child of it. I was crammed with the most costly food from the young gentlemens’ plates, and slept on a silk mattress in their room. The only thing that displeased me was, being fettered with a brass collar, on which was engraven the following words—‘ I am Jolli, and have the honour of belonging to the Right Honourable Baron Rehbock.’

“ But, alas ! I soon experienced the truth of the old proverb, “ that idleness is the root of all evil”;—for the ease and affluence I lived in, created in my mind certain ideas improper and dangerous in my situation, and which for ever alienated my master’s affection from me ; for I aspired to no less than to form

form an acquaintance with his female terriers. He was immoderately fond of that species of dogs, and prided himself not a little in the immaculate purity of his breed.

"One unfortunate day, when, at the hazard of being squeezed to death, I had forced my way through the pales into the kennel, he likewise took it into his head to pay it a visit; but, to describe his rage on finding me there is impossible. 'Hal! carrion!' said he, kicking me in the most furious manner, 'do you want to pollute my Diana! Halloo! Nimrod,' calling to his huntsman, 'see what would have happened if I had not come as I did. Shoot him, or—' after a pause, 'chain him up, and give him nothing but bread and water till he learns better manners.'

"This

“ This last command was obeyed, and Nimrod executed his master’s orders so literally, that, after a week’s confinement, I was but the skeleton of my former self. The two young gentlemen, moved to pity on seeing the lamentable condition I was in, on their knees begged their hard-hearted father to realease me. He at last reluctantly granted their request; but every endeavour to reinstate myself in his favour was vain; his affection was irrecoverably alienated, and I but too plainly perceived he hated me, and that the next fault I committed, the sentence of death or dismission would be pronounced on me: I was therefore extremely cautious, being unwilling to leave a situation I liked so well.

“ The children’s caresses compensated in some measure for the irascibility of their unforgiving

unforgiving father, and I began to accustom myself to his caprices, and bore his ill treatment with the most stoical apathy: this prudent behaviour would, in all probability, in time have subdued his stubborn heart, if I had not committed another blunder, which ended in my ruin.

"One fine autumn morning, as I was running about a neighbouring wood with the two boys, a secret instinct drew me towards the thickest part of it, where I discovered a living creature concealed in the underwood: the sight affected me, and I barked for assistance as loud as I could. In vain did the boys whistle and call to me: I stood unmoved, determined not to leave my post till I made them understand me. With angry impatience they at last came running towards the place where I stood, threatening to punish
my

my disobedience—still I did not move: their curiosity was at length excited, and they scrambled amongst the bushes, to discover, if they could, the reason of my unusual perverseness:—there they found a new-born infant lying on some hay, whose piteous moans seemed to lament its unfortunate existence. The boys, although rude and uncultivated, possessed the feelings of humanity; the eldest therefore took the infant into his arms as gently as he could, and hurried, in a triumphant manner, towards the house, followed by his brother, and preceded by me, barking and wagging my tail in the most exulting manner; for I was conscious of having done a good deed.

“ Their right honourable parents were sitting at breakfast when we arrived; the boys related their adventure with an enthusiasm that

that made their words almost unintelligible, bestowing the greatest praise on me for being the cause of saving the child's life. But, before they had finished their panegyric, their father dashed the pipe he was smoking on the floor, and roared, with a tremendous voice, 'What have you done, you cursed imps? what business had you to meddle with it? do you think I am to maintain all the bastards that are found on my estate? I have enough to do to keep you;—you should have left it where it was to have rotted. And as for you, infernal cur,' continued he, foaming with rage and drawing his sword, 'I'll reward your Samaritan service, in a manner that will prevent your repeating it.' His arm was lifted to strike the deadly blow, and I tremblingly awaited my fate: at that instant Nimrod entered the room to shew his honour a hare he had just shot; the instant the door

was

was open, I seized the opportunity of darting through it as swift as an arrow out of a bow. I ran as fast as I could, without looking back, till I was at a considerable distance from that barbarous man's dwelling: when I supposed myself out of danger of being overtaken, I slackened my pace, and continued my peregrination leisurely, undetermined which way to take, till I came to a little rivulet; there, after refreshing myself with a cooling draught, I lay down, and, fatigued as I was, soon fell fast asleep.

“ I was awoke about noon by a traveller, who seated himself near me; and seeing him take a roll and a piece of cheese out of his pocket, I approached him; and sitting up, in a very humble manner invited myself to dine with him. He understood my meaning, and bestowed part of his frugal repast on me.

" Although I had never learned geography, I easily discovered that the road my benefactor took was not that which led to the detested tyrant's house I had just quitted. I therefore determined to accompany him; and during our journey, I took every opportunity of being serviceable to the good-natured, humane man, and of discovering my talents, which I knew might be profitable to him. If the wind blew his hat off, I ran to fetch it, and presented it to him with so much grace, that he concluded I must belong to the superior order of my kind, and that perhaps he might be able to dispose of me with some advantage to himself. His first business, after he had formed this project, was to release me from the aristocratical ornament that had so long been a plague to me; the collar was with difficulty twisted off and thrown into a deep pit we passed, that it might never rise

up in judgment against him. As soon as I had recovered my long wished-for freedom, I endeavoured to express my gratitude by a tumble, which succeeded so well, that, had Monsieur Lafleur been present, I am sure even he would have applauded it. After having paid this tribute of gratitude, I shook myself for a considerable time, and suppose I felt exactly as a criminal does, whose neck is just released from the pillory.

“We pursued our pilgrimage about six days without meeting with any adventure worth relating, when we arrived at Dresden. It was about noon when we made our *entrée* into that famous town; and, as we passed a large inn, such a savoury smell issued through the kitchen windows, that we both felt an irresistible desire to regale more senses than one with the good things it contained.

“ We

" We went immediately into the kitchen, where, being about dinner time, all hands were busily employed; but a young man, about eighteen, who we afterwards found was the landlord's eldest son, attracted my attention most, as he was taking a prodigious fine turkey off the spit. Without much previous ceremony, I was offered for sale; and, to enhance my value, my companion made me exhibit as many of my tricks as he had discovered. Before the bargain was concluded, the landlord entered the kitchen, which my possessor not immediately observing, kept his hat on; but as I had been taught, if any one did so when a stranger came into the room, to pull it off, I jumped on the table with the velocity of a bird, and snatched the covering from his head. This trait of good-breeding decided my fate: the landlord gave a crown for me, and regaled my seller with a slice of

cold roast meat, and a pint of wine into the bargain, and to me he threw the delicious remains of a leg of mutton.

“ The affluence I lived in soon made me forget my former sufferings, and my curled coat, which, during my journey, was become too wide for me, was speedily sluffed out again; and I succeeded so well in my endeavours to gain the favour of my new master, that in a few days I became cock of the walk.

“ My every wish and want were now gratified, and most probably I should have remained in possession of my good fortune to the end of my life, if I had not again been blinded by my passions; for, not content with the emoluments of the kitchen, and the dainty morsels the guests at the *table d'hôte* left on their

their plates, I was tempted one unfortunate day, when the cook's back was turned, to cast my wishful eyes on a beautiful capon that was just going to be sent to table. For a moment I combated my criminal appetite ; but, finding it too powerful, I greedily seized the forbidden fruit, and was feasting on my prey, when my master came into the kitchen and detected me in the fact. In the first transport of his rage, he drubbed me so unmercifully with a spit, that, in all probability, my death alone would have appeased his anger,—if his son, on hearing my lamentations, had not come to my assistance : he saved my life ; but I was ignominiously driven out of the house, to the great joy of a fox-dog that was chained up in the yard ; and, as I ran across it, I heard the landlord give particular orders to his servants, on no account to admit me into the house again.

“With a heavy heart, downcast looks (such as denote a repentant or detected sinner), and my tail betwixt my legs, I left a town where, for some time, I had been an object of envy to my brother dogs. I now felt the folly, as well as the criminality, of my proceedings, and determined to hide myself and my shame in some solitary corner of the world; where, through abstinence and repentance, I would endeavour to make some atonement for my former gluttony.

“Chance, or rather the invisible hand of justice, facilitated my design, for it conducted my erring feet to a miserable cottage at the end of a small village, or rather hamlet. The owner of it, a blacksmith, was sitting on a bench with his wife, eating his supper; which I no sooner saw, than I approached, and begged he would bestow some part of it on me.

‘Look

‘Look, Hannah,’ said the footy Cyclop, ‘see what a handsome spaniel that is; I have a good mind to take him to replace our poor Spitz.’—‘Do so,’ replied she;—‘but this dog is so well fed, that I dare say he is not without a master.’—Who cares for him?’ was his answer:—‘I tell you, we will keep him,’ and he reached me a piece of barley bread as he spoke, by way of earnest. Whilst he was feeding me, his wife fetched a rope; and, before I was aware, I was tied up in the shed that served for his workshop.

“As soon as it was light the next morning I was placed in a wheel, in which I was always forced to run forwards. This wheel was constructed in such a manner, as to blow the bellows of his forge. At first I objected to this new employment, and made several violent efforts to regain my liberty; but

master Casper knew how to teach me obedience to his will, by the frequent application of the handle of his hammer to my back. I was therefore, although sorely against my inclination, forced to acquiesce; and, thanks to my natural abilities, I soon comprehended my new employment, which, although hard and tiresome, was not very complicated; and the only comfort I now enjoyed, was the pleasure of hearing myself praised;—for my master frequently declared to his wife, that Moor (my new name) was more useful to him than Spitz had ever been.

“ I now, in the most literal sense of the word, led the life of a galley-slave; for I was forced to run in the wheel from morning to night: my food consisted of nothing but the coarsest barley bread, soaked in slop, that was mis-called soup; and, instead of being allowed

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the repose I wanted to recruit my strength on Sundays and holidays, I was then forced to let my master's son ride on my back. When my patience was quite exhausted, I used to express my discontent by growling and snapping, but was soon taught subordination by kicks and blows.

" Six tedious weeks did I remain in this Tartarus; and with each day did the hope of freeing myself remove to a greater distance:—when, one Sunday afternoon, my master and his wife went to church together, and I was left in the room with my little tormentor, who teased me for some time in a manner I was unable to bear; till at last, overcame by rage and despair, I determined to make a violent effort to regain my liberty. In consequence of this resolution, I jumped on the table, and, pushing my head through a

pane of glass, I did not rest till I had forced enough of the casement to give way to admit of my escape from my detested jail.

“ I succeeded in my wish; but, had the blacksmith pursued me as soon as he returned from church, he might, without much difficulty, have overtaken me; for I was almost crippled by continually running in the cursed wheel, and it was near an hour before I recovered the use of my legs. I therefore avoided the high road, and crawled, as well as I was able, along the most unfrequented paths, till I came to a neat farm-house. The humane owner was in the yard when I entered it; and, seeing the emaciated state I was in, gave me some food, and allowed me to rest my weary limbs on some new-mown hay.

“ With recruited strength I left this hospitable dwelling early the next morning, for I
by

by no means thought myself safe from the pursuit of my enemies. I continued to avoid the road, and ran across a field that led to a pleasant little village, through which a river flowed. At the entrance of it, a pretty young woman was washing some children's clothes: a lovely girl, about four years old, was sitting on the grass at some distance from her; she had two boiled potatoes lying on her lap, and one in her hand, which she was just conveying to her mouth.

"I approached the child with the cringing servility of an unbidden guest; but the surprise my unexpected appearance occasioned, and the fear of losing her breakfast, made her give a loud scream: her mother turned round, and seeing, by my humble posture, that my intentions were pacific, said, 'He will not hurt you, Betsey—give him one

of your potatoes—I suppose the poor beast is hungry—I'll give you another when we go home.' The child obeyed her mother; she reached me a potatoe, which I took from her hand in the gentlest manner, and ate by her side.

" Her mother soon finished washing, and went to a little distance to hang up the linen, on a line she had fastened between two apple-trees. Whilst she was thus employed, Betsey, wishing to imitate her mother, got up, and running close to the edge of the river, amused herself with dabbling her pocket-handkerchief in the water. The poor child's head soon grew giddy, her feet slipped, and she fell into the stream without uttering a word. I saw her fall, and, darting after her, caught hold of her petticoat, which I held till her mother, hearing the strange noise I made, turned

turned to see what was the matter. As soon as she did, she hastened to relieve me of the precious burden, which she folded with inimitable tenderness to her maternal bosom, where her darling soon recovered. After wrapping her apron round the child, she was going to return home, when, suddenly recollecting me, she turned back, and snapping her fingers at me, said, with a gentle voice, ‘Come along, poor dog; as long as I live, thou shalt never want a bit of bread.’ The language of humanity is adapted to the comprehension of other animals, as well as to that of human beings, and such was the language Mary spoke. I understood it, and joyfully followed her to the abode of peace and content. Whilst she was undressing the child, she related to her husband what had happened, and how meritorious a part I had acted, with a warmth that penetrated his heart.

heart. ‘Poor fellow!’ said he, patting my head; and my adoption into his family was willingly consented to.

“ I lived a whole year with these worthy people,—if not in affluence, yet in a comfortable mediocrity; and, if I sometimes regretted the flesh-pots of Dresden, the recollection of my sufferings at Vulcan’s forge made me thankfully acknowledge the happiness of my present situation. The grateful Mary often deprived herself of a piece of meat or bacon to give it me privately; and, as for Betsey, I was her idol. I thought I was now settled for life, but my wayward destiny had ordained it otherwise; for poor Mary died in child-bed, and her husband, who was left with three small children, was forced to look out for another helpmate. His choice fell on a tall, hollow-eyed figure, whose manners

were

were so repugnant, that they seemed to declare war against the whole world; and the love of money was the only sensation her cankered heart was capable of feeling. I had sagacity enough to foresee, the moment she entered the house, my reign in it would be over. I judged right: for, before she had been mistress of it a week, she began to grumble at such an idle, useless beast (as she was pleased to term me) being kept. She declared it to be a sin and a shame; and that, for her part, she regarded every morsel of bread that was given me as a theft, as it would be infinitely better bestowed on the chickens, pigeons, or more-useful cats. With such sentiments it will not be doubted that my allowance was lessened every day. I lamented my hard fate, and nothing but my affection for dear Betsey induced me to remain the inmate of a family I now detested. Many were the tears that amiable

amiable child shed at the unmeritted sufferings she and I were forced to endure; and often, to relieve her aching heart, would she run to the church-yard, and moisten, with her tears, the grave of the best of mothers, which she strewed almost every morning with fresh-gathered flowers. I always attended her in these melancholy visits, which were even pleasing to me, for I sincerely regretted my departed friend.

“One day the diabolical step-mother took it into her head to follow us, and to disturb the offering of duty and affection. With the malicious grin of a fiend, she tore the trembling child from the tufted hillock that contained her parent’s dust. I flew at her, determined, at the hazard of my life, to rescue Betsey from her clutches; but, with a large rod she had concealed under her apron,

she

she gave me two such smart strokes across my eyes, that they almost blinded me. I was therefore obliged to loose my hold, and conceal myself behind a tomb-stone. Her blows now fell on the poor child, who she dragged along with her; and I heard the abominable woman say, as she passed the spot where I lay, ‘ If it had not been for that cursed hound, I should not have been plagued with you—I wish he had let you remain in the water.’ It was long before I could determine to return to a house I abhorred; but my affection for the innocent and much-injured Betsey conquered my repugnance, and I determined to share her fate. As soon, therefore, as my pain was a little abated, I followed her; but immediately I entered the gate, the harpie, who stood at a window watching my arrival, gave a signal, which, as soon as her husband and

and the ploughman saw, they came running towards me, armed with flails and dung forks. Betsey, with streaming eyes and uplifted hands, ran after her father, but he was deaf to her prayers. I wagged my tail at the little angel, and my looks were meant to express a sorrowful, and eternal farewell. I then ran as fast as I could, and saved my life by swimming through that river, from which I had once rescued her.

“I ran into a wood that lay on the other side of it, and hid myself in a hollow oak; not from fear of being overtaken, for I knew I should not be pursued; but I was disgusted with the world, and determined to renounce it, and to spend the remainder of my life in this wood, unconnected and unobserved—in short, to turn hermit. But, when I formed the plan, I entirely forgot the article of food, which,

which, however, the croaking of my bowels soon reminded me of, and obliged me, before it was quite dark, to leave my cell and go in quest of. I penetrated deeper into the wood, and at last, with infinite pleasure, saw a glimmering of light peep through the trees. I ran as fast as my legs would carry me towards the spot from whence it proceeded, and found myself in an open place, where a very extraordinary spectacle presented itself to my view; for, between thirty and forty persons, men, women, and children, with sun-burnt faces, and tattered garments, of various forms and colours, were assembled round a large fire; some were eating, others playing, and others roasting and frying. I looked at them some time in silent astonishment, undetermined to which of the company I should first pay my compliments; but at last I fixed on an old Hecuba, who was turning the meagre

carcase

carcase of a goose on a wooden spit;—her, therefore, I approached with all due humility and respect.

‘ Why, what the devil ! ’ said a hollow voice at some distance from me, ‘ is that my dog ? — Yes, on my soul, it is.—Hey, Jolli ! Jolli ! how happens it that we meet here ? ’—I immediately knew (although four years had elapsed since I had seen him) the orator to be my former owner, the puppet-show man ; and, not being fashionable enough to affect forgetting an old acquaintance, I laid aside the incognito, and paid my respects to him in the best manner I was able, hoping thereby to procure his present protection, and to induce him to forgive the vexatious affair I had formerly involved him in.

But

“ But my precautions were superfluous, for he returned my caresses with interest, and assured the company I should prove an acquisition, superior to any gold could purchase.— ‘ Look !’ said he, throwing a hat that lay near him to a considerable distance. With the velocity of a falcon I darted after it, and laid it at my commander’s feet. A shout of universal applause expressed their approbation of this heroic deed ; and the company vied with each other, to give me substantial proofs of their welcome and hospitality.

“ During our supper an expedition was planned for the next day, in which I was to act a capital part ; and I determined to exert myself as much as possible,—when I found Baron Rehbock (who still continued to be an object of hatred to me) was to be laid under contribution, and I pleased myself with thinking I should

should enjoy the (till now to me unknown) luxury of revenge.

" Our intention was fortunately executed ; for, whilst our old Medusa was telling the boy's fortune who had the care of the poultry, and promising him a rich wife, I ran away with three geese : my master, who stood waiting for me behind a tree, gave them a twist of the neck, and put them into his wallet.

" A few days after a rich farmer's yard was robbed, and our society had reason to thank me for two capons and a fat turkey : in short, not a week passed that I did not return to our head-quarters crowned with fresh laurels ; and the praise continually bestowed on me was such, as would make you think me vain was I to repeat it. The name of Cartouch was given me, and I was become a person of such

such consequence as not to be fed with remains. No, the most dainty morsels were selected for me, and my merits even reflected and conferred honour on my master; for the captain of the band died whilst I was in the service, and my protector was unanimously chosen commander in his stead. In short, never did spaniel attain higher honours, or feast better than I did, during the time I was aid-de-camp to the general of an army of gipsies. In my prosperity I forgot both friends and foes. Betsey was the only one I recollect; for often in my dreams did I fancy myself near the dear child, attempting to lick her hand,—but was always prevented by her withdrawing herself, and casting a sorrowful but affectionate look at me.

“ Our frequent depredations at last armed justice against us, and all the neighbouring nobility

nobility and farmers united privately to destroy our whole community. The wood we inhabited was surrounded, and such were the precautions taken, that it was supposed none of us could escape. How great therefore was our surprise one morning, to see the rigid ministers of justice, accompanied with numbers of armed peasants, pouring into our citadel from all sides. The stoutest and most courageous of our band armed themselves, determined to offer the most vigorous resistance ; the rest sought safety in flight : those who did so, as well as the women and children, were almost all taken prisoners. Thus much I saw with a transient glance, for I must own, that, at the beginning of the fray, I thought it best to absent myself till the battle was over. I had nearly gained the wood, and began to think myself out of danger, when a fellow, who I suppose knew me to be

our

our general's right-hand, levelled his piece, loaded with small shot, at me, which left several bloody marks in my hide. Fortunately my legs were not injured, and they did me a very material piece of service; for they conducted me, in a few minutes, far from the hostile field, into a small cavern, by the side of a rock,—which, most probably, had been the hiding-place of some beast of prey, and now seemed destined to be my cell of repentance—perhaps my grave.

“ I had now plenty of leisure to ruminate on the horrors of my situation; for I was confined in this dismal recess a whole week—my wounds not permitting me to leave it sooner; and the only food I had during that time, was some mushrooms, that sprung up in my grot, and the snails that crawled near the entrance of it.

D

“ However,

“ However, at last I recovered my strength; my wounds healed, and I was able to leave this bed of sickness, and again seek my fortune in the wide world; but misfortune still pursued me, and my infamy seemed branded on my forehead. Six weeks did I range about, forlorn, and in the most vagrant state. In vain did I endeavour to bind myself to an itinerant fidler, tinker, and knife-grinder: they refused my offers of service; and all I could procure from them, and others to whom I applied, was the momentary means of subsistence:—nay, so low was I fallen, and so great was my present misery, that I frequently wished myself in the blacksmith’s wheel again,—and should certainly have returned to it, if my perambulations had not led me from the Banks of the Danube to those of the Rhine:—to do so, was therefore impossible; and I was forced to continue buffetting

buffetting on against my wayward fate:—when chance conducted my weary feet to the gates of a cloister, where a lay-brother was distributing food to a number of beggars. A swarm of ragged guests presented themselves, nor was I the last to do so; for I forced my way through the crowd, and placed myself close to the hospitable brother; and, judge how agreeably I was surprised at seeing, foremost in the throng, my former protectress and friend, the old gentlewoman with the Medusa's head. She, from the beginning of our acquaintance, had ever been particularly partial to me, and I had really regretted her loss; for she left our society privately a few days before our unfortunate defeat. It was she who introduced my dear Leda (a female of my own kind she met on the road, and inticed to follow her) to me, that I might have a companion to amuse my leisure

hours; and it was she that had the gallant thought to teach me to jump over a stick at the mention of Leda's name. I perceived, by her large rosary and penitential looks, that she had exchanged the character of a Sybil for that of a Devotee—a part she was very capable of acting—having, in her youth, been cook to a priest. As soon as I saw her, I wagged my tail, and fawningly implored her protection. ‘Good luck!’ said she, ‘is it you, my dear Jolli?’ She patted my head as she spoke, and reached me a morsel of the bread she had just received.

“The company that surrounded us murmured at the profanation she had been guilty of, and clamorously complained to the distributor of her criminal conduct, in wasting the gifts of the cloister on a dog. ‘But you cannot think, holy father,’ said she, in a

whining voice, ‘ what a sensible animal this is ;—for my part, I believe he is inspired, and I desire you will introduce me to your superior—depend on it, you will have no cause to repent doing so.’ She pronounced the last words in such a positive manner, that he, without making any objections, went in, and informed the Abbot of her desire.

“ He soon returned with an answer favourable to her wishes; and we were introduced to this most reverend priest, who was a fat old Bonze, rather hard of hearing. The old witch kissed the hem of his garment, and presented me to him, as an offering of her respect, and a tribute due to his worth.

“ I was then ordered to display my talents, and give a sample of my abilities, which often made the holy father’s heavy sides

wag. To conclude the farce:—she held up her staff, and ordered me to jump for the Emperor, and afterwards (I am uncertain if it was a joke, or if she did it from custom) for Leda.

“ The prelate, who was called Father Beda, misunderstood the old woman, and thought my caper was for him. This made my fortune: he honoured me with a nod of his head, as a token of approbation; and giving the old lady a florin, and some amulets, dismissed her, with many thanks. I was immediately recommended to the particular care of the brother-cook, who gave me so large a portion of food, that I, who was the day before in danger of being starved to death, narrowly escaped falling a victim to my voraciousness; and dying of an indigestion.

“ The

"The fortunate turn of my affairs likewise proved beneficial to my old duenna; for the reverend Abbot, as a token of his esteem, ordered her to be placed on the list of his private pensioners, and a few peas, and a loaf of barley-bread to be given her weekly. Nor did I omit taking every opportunity of shewing my gratitude; for, as often as she came to the cloister, I bestowed the most servile and fawning caresses on her. I hardly ever left the Abbot's side. French rolls and roast beef was my most ordinary food, and the good-natured old man often lamented that I could not partake of his champagne and burgundy. Whenever we had company to dinner, and that was almost every day, it was my busines to amuse them during the desert; and the conclusion of the pantomime was always a vault for Father Beda.

" Thus, in ease and affluence, passed another year of my life ; and as I always attended his reverence to the choir, I acquired the reputation of holiness, which seemed to promise, my good fortune would only end with my life : but, alas ! I was doomed to be the ball of fate.

" The pious Abbot's birth-day was celebrated with a magnificent banquet, to which a number of the superior orders of the neighbouring clergy was invited ; amongst the rest, an old Abbess honoured it with her presence, and accompanied her congratulations with the present of a beautiful little greyhound, which the Great Frederick himself would thankfully have accepted of. It was impossible that such a piece of gallantry, from so respectable a person, should be otherwise than pleasing to the prelate ; but, as

Prince

Prince Zephyr, my rival, had learned nothing but to cringe and fawn, I, for some time, remained the favourite; and the only mortification I endured, was being forced to divide with him the dainty morsels, that, till then, had entirely fallen to my share.

“ But, through various servile arts, did the mean parasite seek to undermine me in my master’s affection; and, when he found he had succeeded, the liberties he took were insupportable;—for often would he have the audacity to approach my plate, and endeavour to defraud me of my allowance. This occasioned continual skirmishes between us, in which I was always conqueror, and always blamed.

“ One day our litigations, about the remains of a pheasant, produced a formal

battle,—in which I asserted my superiority in so energetic a manner, as to tear one of my antagonist's ears almost off; who, with dreadful howls, crept for safety under his protector's hairy garment. This proved my destruction;—for Beda, trembling with rage, and forgetting his gouty twinges, gave me two or three violent kicks, and ordered me to be hanged that minute; which sentence would have been executed, if a half-starved poet, who had asked alms of the Abbot in hexameter, and, because he had titled him His Holiness, had been invited to dine with him, had not desired to have me..

“ The revengeful prelate thought he could not inflict a severer punishment on me, than by giving me to this minstrel, whose hollow cheeks and voracious appetite assured him starving would be my fate. He therefore

consented to the suppliant's wish; and, as soon as the meal had ended with a glass of tokay, which he called nectar, I was for ever banished from an asylum, where I had spent the most indolent and peaceful days of my life.

"The most dismal *presentiment* filled my mind; and I crept by the side of my new master, as if the sentence, so lately pronounced, was going to be put into execution; and vain were his endeavours, by whistling and snapping his fingers at me, to put me into better spirits.

"Towards evening, we arrived at a large town in the palatinate, where my present patron occupied a garret at a bookseller's.

" Thedulf (the name of my bard) was an enemy to French names: mine was therefore exchanged for that of Hector; and I was, with all due formality, appointed the guard of his castle, and protector of his property. He threw down a couple of old wigs, which were to be my bed; and as his supper consisted of nothing but a pipe of tobacco and a glass of water, I began to fear I should be forced to go supperless to bed; but at last, feeling in his coat pocket, he found a hard crust of bread, strongly infused with the plant he was so fond of, which he threw to me. This scanty meal formed a dreadful contrast to the luxury I had lately been accustomed to, and gave me a sad sample of the want I should experience in this priest of Apollo's service, which I soon found to be much worse than my Cyclop's; for, if he had not taken me with him two or three times a week to a

public

public house, where he was the president of the club of some journeymen printers, who used to bestow a bone or a piece of cheese on me now and then, the abbot's prediction would certainly have been verified.

“ Once, as he had written a pompous epithalamium on the occasion, he was invited to a wedding in the country; and the fear of being thought troublesome induced him to leave me at home. Twelve tedious hours did I impatiently wait for his return, without tasting a morsel of food; but at last, hunger prompted me to an act of desperation, that I afterwards severely repented; for I jumped on the table, and, seizing the first manuscript I found, tore, and eagerly devoured it. I had destroyed several sheets when Thedulf entered the room: his blood was heated by the frequent libations of the Hymeneal cup,

and

and the sight of the mischief I had done set it in a blaze. He flew at me with the fury of a lioness that is robbed of her young; and, seizing me by the neck, whirled me to some distance from the table, and, in a tone of voice that I believe no human organ capable of imitating, exclaimed, ‘Ha! damn’d hound! what hast thou done, cursed beast! my tragedy!’ wringing his hands—‘the masterpiece that would have immortalized my name! Die, monster!’ snatching up a penknife, and directing a stab at me as he spoke. ‘But, no,’ continued he, after a pause, ‘your impious blood shall not pollute my hand;—thine’s a public crime; and the public hand of justice shall rid the world of thee.’ He then turned over the leaves, that he might be able to ascertain the full extent of his loss; which, as soon as he had done, he broke out in the following heart-moving ejaculation:

‘ Oh,

‘ Oh, Melpomene ! Melpomene ! How could’st thou suffer the darling of my heart, the offspring of *thy* worshipper, to fall a victim to the insatiate jaws of that senseless beast ? But why do I blame thee ? the fault of admitting dogs into thy temple, which ought to have been sacred, was mine.’’ After he had ended this apostrophy, he undressed himself, and went to bed ; and I crept into my corner, determined patiently to await my impending fate ;—indeed I was very indifferent about it ; for, since I had been confined in this poetical prison, my life was become a burden to me, and I cared not how soon I was released from it. It was late the next morning before my Sophocles awoke : his first glance was directed towards the melancholy remains of his immortality. The sight renewed his grief :—he sighed as if his heart would break, and could hardly restrain

restrain his tears; but the sight of me, the author of all his woe, soon chased every tender feeling from his heart. He arose in the agony of despair; and, after hurrying on his clothes, tied a rope round my neck, and dragged me down the stairs after him. He inquired of the first person he met in the street, where the hangmen lived; and, as his abode was at no great distance, we soon arrived at it; and I must own that, notwithstanding my resignation the night before, I, fancying this would be the last walk I should ever take, lamented the shortness of it.— ‘Here’s a mad dog, master Martin,’ said Thedulf to him; ‘be so good as to dispatch him for me.’—‘It is not my business to do so,’ replied he;—‘however, if it will oblige you, I have no objection.’ The man looked earnestly at me: the manner of his doing so inspired me with hope;—I therefore laid myself

myself at his feet, and wagged my tail at him. ‘ But,’ continued he, ‘ you are mistaken, Sir; this dog is not mad.’—‘ Not mad!’ said Thedulf, foaming with rage—‘ if he had not been mad, do you think he would have devoured my invaluable manuscript?’—‘ I warrant he would have let your paper alone,’ was Martin’s reply, ‘ if you had given him other food enough to satisfy his hunger: but there’s nothing so easy as to convince you of your mistake.’ He then offered me a piece of bread, which I took from his hand in a very gentle manner, and immediately eat; he set a basin of water on the ground, and, when he saw that I lapped it, he exclaimed, ‘ Do you see that I am in the right! —a mad dog neither eats nor drinks.’—‘ But he is mad for all that,’ replied Thedulf, trembling with passion as he spoke, ‘ and I say he shall die.’ The man, provoked at his obstinacy,

obstinacy, said, with a sneer, ‘ you appear to be by far the maddest of the two ; it is a shame to kill a poor beast for such a trifling fault : however,’ continued he, smiling, ‘ if you are determined on his death, you must give me half-a-florin for my trouble.’—Thedulf, who at that time was not worth so much money, grumbly replied, ‘ Not I—you may keep him, and die of the hydrophobia, if you like it—he has cost me enough already.’ So saying, he snatched open the door, and left the room.

“ I was far from feeling any desire to accompany him ; but endeavoured to express my gratitude to my deliverer, by sitting up, and licking his hand. He in return freed me from the rope, and gave me the remains of his breakfast, which was very welcome to me,

me, having tasted nothing since my paper meal.

" Before I had finished eating, a grey-headed old invalid entered the room. ' I have been told, Sir,' said he, ' that you are a charitable man, and that you are possessed of an excellent eye-water; if you are, pray bestow a little of it on a poor old cripple, who was deprived of the use of his right arm, and one of his eyes, in the last war, and now the sight of the other begins to fail me.'

" I was too much taken up with my feast to pay much attention to the suppliant; but, as soon as I had finished, I listened attentively to the voice, which seemed familiar to me, and yet I could not recollect the person it proceeded from. I approached, and attentively

tively surveyed him for some time; and at last, to my inexpressible joy, discovered him to be no other than my old mentor, Monsieur Lafleur. Age, infirmity, and distress, had so altered him, that none but the penetrating eye of gratitude and friendship could have discovered his features; but no sooner had I done so, than I jumped, barked, and sprawled on the floor, and did not cease my acclamations of joy till, with his half eye, he recollected his faithful Jolli.

“ Martin, who had been a silent spectator of this scene, was really affected: he gave the old warrior an alms, and a phial of eye-water, for which he thanked him, but did not leave the room; and I, not knowing how to make myself understood, encircled his emaciated legs with my fore-paws. ‘ I understand you,’ said the humane man—‘ you wish

to

to have your old friend again;—take him—he will be more useful to you than me, for I fear you will soon be in need of a leader.'

"With a joy that even my present power of utterance can but faintly express, I followed the infirm protector of my helpless youth through the streets, where his piteous moans could barely procure him the scanty means of subsistence; yet every morsel of bread or bone of meat the hand of charity put into the wooden bowl he carried under his arm, he shared with me. It was more for his sake than my own that I lamented the penury we lived in, and grieved at the hardness of heart the affluent shewed when they drove him from their door, without relieving his wants.

"Lafleur's

“ Lafleur’s attachment to me increased every day;—misfortunes had worn off the rough edges of his character, and opened his heart to the finer feelings of humanity. Although his fate was hard, he bore it without repining; he seemed reconciled to it, and, without murmuring, patiently waited for death—the cure of all his woes.

“ A few months after our meeting, Martin’s prediction was verified; for he was entirely deprived of his sight, and I, fastened to a slight cord, (a strong one was unnecessary) was his guide and leader. I picked out the way with the utmost care, that his feet might not be bruised by the stones, or his body wounded by the wanton or careless cruelty of still harder man.

“ A

“ A district of about three miles was the route we daily took ; and, since Lafleur’s blindness, I think our alms were not quite so sparingly bestowed as before ; but, when I found that want and misery had not the power of moving the heart, I used to exhibit some of my tricks, and am sorry to say, they often produced more than the sight of a fellow-creature in distress.

“ In one of our peregrinations we wandered to a neighbouring town ; it being fair-day, promised amply to reward us, and I exerted myself, as well as I was able, in the different evolutions I displayed ; nor did my efforts to please remain unrewarded,—for the tribute of a copper-coin was thrown into my master’s hat by almost every spectator.—During the time he was employed in putting the money into his pocket, a well-dressed boy,

who

who had forced his way through the crowd whilst I was performing my exercise, and had seemed particularly delighted with me, endeavoured to entice me to come to him, by offering me a piece of cake. I turned and looked steadfastly at my helpless master, thinking thereby to prevail on him to bestow his charity where it was so much wanted; but the boy either did not, or would not, understand my meaning, and had either taken a fancy to me, or wanted to tease a blind old beggar; he therefore came nearer, and stooping, as if he meant to play with me, suddenly cut the cord asunder with a knife he held concealed for that purpose, and taking hold of the end that fastened me, endeavoured to drag me away by force. To suppress my rage any longer was impossible: I flew at the little villain, and tore a piece of flesh out of the calf of his leg. The boy roared as if he

he was possessed and was carried away, and I again placed myself quietly by Lafleur's side; for, either owing to fear or approbation, none of the surrounding multitude offered to chastise me.

" But, a few minutes after, I saw two men approach us, with guns in their hands, who, by their dress, I supposed to be the ministers of justice:—they were so, and employed by the town-major, whose son I had bitten, to punish my crime. I had time enough to escape; but, instead of doing so, I crept closer to my master,—who, when he was told the danger I was in, bent over me—thinking, by doing so, he should be able to protect me. But his effort was vain—for the mercenary slaves fired; and the same ball that passed through my head penetrated his heart.—‘Bury us together!’ was the last sound I

heard with my mortal faculties, and likewise the first my aërial substance comprehended. Our shades met—we tried to embrace, but an invisible power tore us asunder; but as the spirit of my friend ascended, it called to me and said, ‘ We shall meet again !’

CONCLUSION.

“ Yes, so you will,” re-echoed the united voices of the whole society, who, with silent admiration, had listened to the stranger’s relation. They repeated their congratulations with the most fraternal affection; and the president, who was no other than Argus, Ulysses’s dog, with sympathetic feelings, and a hearty shake of the paw, said, “ Bravo, brother! let us be friends.”

THE

THE MASK.

A STORY FOUNDED ON FACTS.

BEFORE Count de S * *, chamberlain to the reigning Duke of B * *, had celebrated the anniversary of his wedding-day, he was deprived by a cruel and malignant disorder of his young and beauteous wife, he fondly loved. Count de S. was in the prime of life, rich, and amiable,—esteemed by all who knew him, and (what would have been of infinite greater value to most courtiers than domestic happiness) the declared favourite of his prince, as an agreeable exterior and gentleness of manners made him

that of the ladies; and willingly would every one belonging to court have accepted the offer of his hand, and have endeavoured to replace his recent loss.

Yet, with all these advantages, he remained inconsolable; for Count de S. notwithstanding his noble birth, was plebeian enough to possess a feeling heart; and his sorrow was deep-rooted and sincere. Solitude, in which he could, uninterruptedly, nurse his grief, was what he sought for most; and he avoided, with studious care, the circle in which he was accustomed to move. Numerous societies, parties of pleasure, and public amusements, were become odious to him; and instead of attending his prince to them as he used to do, he would sit in his solitary apartment, with his eyes fixed on the portrait of his much-loved and ever-regretted Amelia. His intimate

intimate friends sometimes called on him,—but their company was painful; and his inattention plainly shewed how much he preferred the society of his own thoughts. A heart-rending sigh was all the answer they received when they talked to him of fortitude and resignation, or proposed to him the usual methods of amusement; or dissipation to facilitate his cure.

Thus passed several months. The carnival came, but his sorrow remained unabated. Pleasure and he seemed to have taken an eternal farewell of each other.

During the time of his absenting himself, many courtiers, doubtless out of the most disinterested attachment to his highness, had endeavoured to occupy the place of the negligent favourite, and had not failed whenever

an opportunity offered of mentioning his melancholy, which they declared to be misanthropy in the most ironical terms.

One of them attempting at wit, said he was a second Orpheus, who would bear no other sound than that of Euridice. Oh, my Euridice! to meet his ear. But a serious and disapproving look of the Duke suddenly stopped the effusion of their mirth.

It is true, that Prince was almost weary of his immoderate sorrow, and wished for the society of a man he knew to be honest, on whose judgment he could depend, and with whom he could converse on subjects of more consequence than the planning of a fete, or the merits of an opera-dancer; he therefore determined himself to attempt his cure, and endeavour

endeavour to reconcile him to a world he was formed to adorn.

"Your sorrow is just," said he to the Count, one day when he appeared at the court after a long absence; "and the respect you pay to the memory of your wife is praiseworthy;—but will your tears recal her? why, therefore, must the dead engross all your thoughts? surely some part of them might, without injustice, be bestowed on the living. Now I, for example, flatter myself I have a right to claim some part of your heart, and yet you frequently let whole weeks pass without my seeing you."

"I am sensible of the justice and kindness of your reproof," replied the Count; "but I beg your highness will excuse my failing in my attendance lately, and place it to the account of a trifling indisposition."

"Which was most likely occasioned by your continually brooding over your gloomy reflections, and depriving yourself of air and exercise. How many assemblies have you been at this carnival, Count?"

"To own the truth—none."

"I suspected that would be your answer. But I intend giving a masked-ball the day after to-morrow, and hope you will not refuse appearing at it."

"If your Highness commands my attendance."

"I understand your manœuvre perfectly, Count: you think, by making use of the word *command*, to escape me; for you know I detest forcing any ones inclination—particularly yours; but, for once, art shall counteract art,—for, know, I expect this proof of friendship from you."

The

The Count bowed, and promised to obey
the Duke's orders.

Great preparations were made for this ball,
which was to be the most splendid that had
taken place during the whole. Half the
town were in raptures, and busily employed
to shew their fancy, and exert their taste on
this important occasion.

On the appointed evening the rooms were
opened, and a great number of masks assem-
bled in the ball-room. Count de S. entered
with the Duke, and did all in his power at
least to assume the appearance of gaiety and
content: he did not dance, but conversed
with his acquaintance, particularly the Duke,
whose side he seldom quitted.

About two hours, or perhaps rather more, might have passed in this manner, when the Count, either through weariness or ennui, stood still, and leaned against a pillar that commanded the view of the room: the Duke placed himself near him, and they amused themselves some time with observing the bustle of the motley crew. They had not stood long, when the Count's attention was attracted by a black female domino, in a white mask, that entirely concealed her neck and face, passing and repassing them several times; she was alone, and her dress, though new, and composed of the best materials, was quite plain. There was nothing, therefore, extraordinary in that; but her elegant form, the inimitable grace with which she walked, and her every motion appeared to him a striking resemblance of the manners of his departed wife. At last he lost sight of her;

but,

but, turning round some moments after, he perceived her leaning against a pillar at a little distance: her eyes were intensely fixed on him, and she seemed unconscious of the noise and confusion that surrounded her. The Count, notwithstanding his endeavours to do so, could not suppress the alternate sensations of curiosity and uneasiness the unexpected sight occasioned; and the Duke, at last observing his agitation, inquired if anything was the matter with him?

"Nothing," replied the Count—"I have just seen a mask that has interested my feelings."

"Then, if I was in your place, I would speak to her," said the Duke. "Do not let me confine you;—consider yourself perfectly at liberty—for my wish will be fulfilled if you are amused."

The Count followed the Duke's advice; but, although the distance at which the incognito stood, made it impossible for her to hear the discourse that passed, yet she seemed to have divined it, and to be determined to frustrate the Count's intention; for, as soon as he moved towards her, she quitted the place where she had been standing, and he lost sight of her in the crowd. He followed her, and her wish to avoid him seemed equal to his desire of overtaking her: every one made way for the Duke's favourite, so that it was impossible for her to escape his pursuit long. He addressed her in one of the phrases usual on such occasions, which mean nothing but "I wish to hear the sound of your voice."

She answered him in the same manner. Her words were few, but they penetrated his very soul;—for, to his heated imagination,

the

the voice seemed the same as hers who was ever present to his mind; he, however, endeavoured to conceal the agitation he felt, and continued the discourse.

She answered his every question, without hesitating, in a positive and concise manner; but the inward and solemn tone in which she articulated her words increased his wonder, and impressed the idea her form had suggested more forcibly in his mind. He proposed to her to walk round the room, and offered her his arm, which she accepted; but his fortitude almost forsook him when he found her touch so gentle, that it hardly resembled the pressure of a human arm: he, however, bid defiance to his apprehension, and said, “By your not doing me the honour of leaning on my arm, Madam, I am induced

to think my company is disagreeable to you—perhaps my intrusion is impertinent."

"Not at all, Sir;—nay, so far from it, you are the only person in the room I interest myself about."

"Was I ever happy enough to be in company with you before?"

"Often! here, and in many other places;—sometimes in, but oftener without, a mask."

"I find, then, you are intimately acquainted with me."

"Intimately! I formerly hoped I possessed a share of your heart—now I am convinced I did."

"Astonishing! But do I know you?"

"Certainly! most certainly you do."

"Dare I, Madam, presume to ask your name?"

"You would receive more pain than pleasure by my answering your question."

"That's

“ That’s impossible;—the knowledge of your name cannot give me pain—do satisfy my curiosity.”

“ I would not refuse, were I not certain my compliance would be hurtful to you. To oblige your friend, you are come to this place in search of amusement; and, were I to answer your question, it would so unsettle your mind, that it would be impossible for you to find it.”

Thus began the discourse, which every moment became more interesting, and more incomprehensible to the Count, whose mind was filled with the most dark and gloomy presages, which his reason in vain endeavoured to combat; he wished, yet dreaded an éclaircissement.

He led the discourse to several past occurrences of his life. The mask was acquainted with them, and recalled to his mind many he did not mention. Nothing she said bore the remotest affinity to jest, ridicule, or the desire to tease. Every word penetrated his soul.

Trembling as he spoke, he mentioned the happiness he had enjoyed during the short period of his marriage.—The mask was silent on that subject, or, when pressed to speak, answered in monosyllables,—and those were pronounced in a hollow and semi-articulate tone of voice.—The Count conjured her to tell him what she knew about it.

"You feel," replied she, "the loss you have sustained; but your being here in quest of pleasure, convinces me you will soon for-

get

get her you have hitherto so sincerely lamented, and find consolation in the arms of another."

She withdrew her arm from his as she finished speaking; and he, thinking it was her design to leave him, clasped her hand, and entreated her to tell him who she was, and from whence she came.

Instead of an answer, she waved her right hand upwards, as much as to say, "From thence."

The Count, finding he could no longer conceal the agitation he was in, and unwilling to attract the notice of the company, begged she would retire with him to a part of the room where they should be less exposed to observation. She complied with his desire, and

and seated herself by his side ;—when, with all the eloquence he was master of, he tried to prevail on her to tell him her name, or unmask.

Long did she remain deaf to his entreaties; but, on his persevering in his request, and saying, “ Had you ever loved as I have, you would be less inflexible—you would pity, and remove the pain you have occasioned. I conjure you, by all that’s dear, by the object of your affection, to grant my wish.”

“ Well, then,” replied she, in a reluctant manner, “ your desire shall be fulfilled : I will unmask, but not here ;—if you persevere in your request, lead me to a private apartment.”

The Count started up, and endeavoured to take her hand.

“ Forbear !”

"Forbear!" said she, withdrawing it, "and once more let me warn you against gratifying an idle curiosity, which, I fear, or am rather certain, you will have cause dearly to repent."

Her words, however, had not the power to alter his resolution; and, finding him determined, she accepted his arm. As he led her across the room, he met one of the Duke's attendants, whom he desired to open the door of one of the private apartments contiguous to the ball-room. The man did as he was desired; and, after bringing candles, left the room.

As soon as they were alone, the mask cautiously looked round, and, finding they were in no danger of being observed, asked her conductor if he still wished to see her
true

true face; and, on his replying in the affirmative, she raised her hand, and took off her mask;—which she had no sooner done, than the Count suddenly, as if he had been struck by lightning, fell on the floor, deprived of sense and motion; for, when the mask was removed, a death-head presented itself to his affrighted view.

It is impossible to say how long he remained in a state of insensibility; but, his recovering from it, was entirely owing to the Duke's watchful care: he had attentively followed his favourite with his eyes since the time he quitted him;—the extraordinary attention he had shewn the strange mask, the warmth and energy with which he seemed to speak to her, and the abrupt manner of their leaving the room together, had excited his curiosity. He at first thought it was a little affair

affair of gallantry—not unusual on such occasions; but the more he reflected, the less probable it seemed to him to be so. The state of mind the Count was in, the solemnity with which the discourse had been carried on, and the incautious manner of their leaving the room, at last convinced him his suspicion was without foundation. “But where can he be?” said the Duke,—for the supposition of his being gone away without taking leave, or sending an excuse, seemed more improbable than the other.

He waited a considerable time in the expectation of his friend returning, and clearing up this mysterious affair; but, on his not doing so, he became seriously uneasy, and gave orders for inquiries to be made about him. He was soon informed that the Count had retired with a lady in a black domino to a private

a private apartment: he went to it, and knocked at the door; but, as no answer was returned, he opened it, and went in,—when, to his great surprise, he saw his friend stretched on the floor, to all appearance dead. Doctors and surgeons were immediately sent for; and, after many fruitless applications, they at last rekindled the vital spark.

When he was enough recovered to be able to speak, the Duke ordered every one to leave the room, and then desired the Count to inform him what had happened, which he did, with every exaggerated circumstance his terrified imagination suggested.

The Duke fancied him in a delirium; but his pulse, and the opinion of the physicians, contradicted that suspicion;—besides, he had himself been an eye-witness to the beginning
of

of the adventure, which he found the Count related exactly as it had happened.

Inquiries were made, and rewards offered, for the discovery of the mask ; but no one had seen her go away, and yet she was nowhere to be found. There was not a servant nor hackney-coachman that had waited near the palace that evening who was not interrogated—but all to no purpose.

Some time after two chairmen appeared, who said they had carried away a lady in a black domino about an hour before ; and one of them added that she did not seem to come immediately from the ball room, for he saw her slip through a back door of the palace.

“ But where did you carry her to ?” was the question asked by several voices at the same time.

“ To

"To St. Vincent's church-yard" was the reply; to which they added the following information: That she ordered them to stop at the gate of it; and as she got out of the chair, she threw a ducat into one of their hats, which, on examining, they found old and cankered;—that the iron-gate opened at her approach, and shut with a violent slam as soon as she had entered it; but what became of her afterwards they could not tell, as they lost sight of her after she had proceeded a few steps along the right side of the church-yard.

This account increased the wonder the strange phenomenon had occasioned, for the Count's family vault was known to be in that spot.

It

It will be easily imagined that a story of such a nature soon became the town-talk; and I suppose, the next day, there was not a person in B. who had not heard of the spectre that had appeared at the last masquerade: it was the topic of every conversation, and various were the conjectures and opinions formed about it. The multitude declared it to be neither more nor less than the ghost of the departed Countess; others shrugged their shoulders, and owned they could not tell what to make of it;—but the more discerning few affirmed the whole to be a well-contrived piece of deception, and laughed at the idea of a spirit employing chairmen to convey it away; and they enforced their argument with the following observation:—That even allowing the possibility of the dead appearing to the living, in the present case the visit was contradictory; for, if it was meant as a chaf-

tisement; it was certainly unjust; if a friendly call, it had fixed on a very improper time, place, and aspect, to shew its affection. But, unfortunately, the Count did not belong to this latter class of reasoners, and his mind was too much weakened by the shock he had received to allow him to judge without prejudice; for he was firmly persuaded it was his wife that had appeared to him; and, that her doing so, was to reproach him for engaging in scenes of dissipation so soon.

Filled with this idea, he avoided company more than ever; and vain were the efforts of reason and friendship to convince him of the absurdity of the notions he had imbued, and to draw him from his solitary apartment. Want of exercise, and continually brooding over his melancholy thoughts, weakened his mind as well as body: his health declined daily,

daily, and his disorder was some time after pronounced a lingering consumption, which united him to the innocent cause of his affliction about two years after he lost her. His death renewed the story of the apparition: it was again talked of—again wondered at; till a newer subject was started, which buried it in oblivion—at least for a long time.

About five and twenty years after the Count's decease, the remains of an old lady, who had formerly been maid of honour to the Duchess of B. were gathered to those of her ancestors, and she, on her death-bed, made the following confession, which was published, by her order, as soon as she was interred:—Count de S. she declared to have been her first, her only love; and that he, doubtless encouraged by the advances she

made, had pretended feeling a reciprocal passion, and had triumphed over her virtue ;—that at that time she had no doubt of his intentions being honourable ; but that she was soon after cruelly convinced of her mistake, by his publicly paying his addresses to the lady he afterwards married ;—that his inconstancy had deeply wounded her heart, which doated on him ; and that she had used every effort in her power to recall his wandering affections ; but that, when she found none of them succeeded, she, in the agony of despair, had swore she would revenge herself on the author of her misery, and that his heart should feel the anguish hers, thro' him, had suffered ;—that, the better to conceal her purpose, she had assumed the appearance of indifference, and seemed to favour the addresses of another lover. The Count

was

was deceived by her art; which succeeded so well, that she at last gained the friendship and confidence of his wife, by which means she knew almost every thing that passed in his family;—that, during the whole time, she had studiously sought for an opportunity of revenge, without being able to find one that exactly suited her wish;—that the Countess's death renewed the hope of her charms again triumphing over his fickle heart; but that hope vanished, on her finding him so absorbed in sorrow when he came to court, that he hardly noticed her;—that his affliction, and the masked-ball she knew the Duke intended giving on his account, suggested the idea she afterwards put in practice. Her height was nearly the same as hers she wished to represent; and her being more *en bon point*, was concealed by

tight-lacing; but as the manner was what she intended should attract his notice, that was what she most studiously imitated. As she went to the ball early in another dress, danced, and talked to a number of different persons, and purposely placed herself by the Duke twice when he was speaking to the Count, and had taken her mask off, it was not likely any suspicion should fall on her. The death's head was a mask she wore under the other; and she easily concluded the fright would operate so violently on the Count, as to prevent his examining it; but, even should that have been the case, her words were calculated to admit of a double interpretation. An old waiting-maid, that had been her nurse, was her only assistant and confidant in the whole affair, and on her fidelity she knew she could safely depend; for,
besides

besides her personal attachment, the Count had recently offended her, by refusing to give her son a place she had asked him for. It was she who, with a pick-lock, had opened the church-yard gate, and, in defiance of the horrors of the place, had waited there alone till her mistress came,—who immediately hurried on her first dress, and returned, elated with the success of her scheme, to the ball-room, where she arrived before the Count's situation was discovered. Long had her attendant been numbered with the silent dead: the secret was therefore lodged in her own heart,—which, however, proved a traitor to her; for, when she found how fatal the consequences of the step she had taken were, her conscience tormented her day and night, and prevented her enjoying a moment's repose. However, she endeavoured to stifle

its voice, by continually engaging in scenes of dissipation, which succeeded for some time; but the bed of sickness and death is a rigid and awful monitor; and her conscience, that had been lulled whilst she enjoyed her health, was roused by it, and accused her incessantly of being the Count's murderer; and urged her, as the only atonement in her power, to make an ample confession of the criminal step she had taken.

Thus was an affair, that for years had appeared an unfathomable mystery, explained; and we may see thereby, that no danger is too great, nor no revenge too cruel, for a forsaken and jealous woman to attempt.

THE

THE FLORIST.

THE worthy curate of Wellstone had passed the greatest part of the afternoon of a sultry day in his garden, looking after, and admiring his flowers, which composed no small share of the earthly treasures he possessed; for fortune had distributed her gifts to him with a partial and niggardly hand.— The cultivation of flowers had been his favorite study for above fifteen years, the occupation of his leisure hours, his ever variating amusement; the least expensive play-thing he could have fixed on, and which to him was ever new, never satiating.

A toy, a pastime of some sort or other, is indispensably necessary for us in this state of childhood, to which play seems annexed ; it enables us to execute the business of life properly, and enjoy, with double relish, the pleasures of it. As a small spring, in a complicated piece of machinery, it keeps the whole in order, and is to life, what the addition of music is to a well-constructed time-piece—a pleasing improvement, which, without impairing any part, affords an agreeable variety to the whole ; and happy's the mortal whose play-thing is as innocent, and attended with as little expence as the Curate's of Willstone was. His whole family partook of the satisfaction his flowers afforded ; to them therefore was he indebted for the happiness of communicating pleasure to others. Rosina, his eldest daughter, with her Madona face and form, diligently assisted him in rearing, trans-

planting and watering them ; and his younger children brought plants and flowers to him from all parts, from which he selected those he thought best ; although it did not unfrequently happen, that what he thought of immense value, and attended with the greatest care, would, by most other people, have been thrown away as useless. His wife, a worthy unassuming woman, was blessed with such a pliability of disposition, that she in every thing conformed herself to his taste, which she so entirely adopted, that she frequently mistook it for her own ; she praised what he commended, rejected what he disapproved, and rooted up those flowers he thought unworthy a place in his garden. Without doubt this complacency of temper was the charm that for so many years had fettered his heart most, for he loved her with undiminished affection. A good-natured acquiescence in the

humour, taste, and little caprices of those we are connected with, is almost always attended with the best effects, and is the roseate chain that binds us fastest to their hearts ; it cannot easily break, for few will dis sever what they themselves entwined. The curate of Well-stone therefore enjoyed a greater share of happiness than usually falls to the lot of mortals.

This he seemed to feel, for an air of cheerful content was diffused over his countenance. As he stept into the room where his wife was sitting, " so, you are come in already," said she, as soon as she saw him ; " I knew you would not be able to remain in the garden long ; it must be very hot there, for I am almost melted in the room. Is the bud blown that was beginning to open last night ?"

Curate. “ Yes, Margaret ! my favourite, the ash-coloured carnation with yellow stripes, is now in its full beauty ; six flowers are already blown, and, if no misfortune happens to it, there are three more buds that promise to come to perfection. It’s a beautiful flower, I don’t believe it has its equal in the whole country ; you will be surprised when you see it in the evening. The flame-colour is likewise in full bloom ; its colour is perfect, the deepest shade : but only think, the large bud you was so much delighted with is burst ; it’s a pity, a great pity, for it is a fine, very fine flower. You must give me a needle-full of thread by-and-by ; I’ll tie it together as carefully as I can, otherwise it will be quite spoiled.”

Wife. “ I believe it will be better if we take the thread double, we need not roll it round

round so often then. But tell me the reason of your looking so cross at me, when I gave the poor woman a piece of bread just now?"

Curate. "Because your gift displeased me."

Wife. "Why! what should I have given her?"

Curate. "Less advice, and a larger piece of bread."

Wife. "I gave her as much bread as I could afford; the advice was in the bargain, and well meant."

Curate. "But, for all that, it will not satisfy her hungry stomach. I wish Rosina had been there; she would have been more bountiful."

Wife.

Wife.—Yes, I suppose she would; for Rosina does not know how hard it is to earn a piece of bread. When I was as young as she is, I was the same; and used to think, when I got up from table, that I should never be hungry again; and that every thing would be replaced as soon as consumed: but, at our age, we know what things cost, and how hard it is to make both ends meet. Only consider the expences we have lately had: Rosina's new gown, which, although coarse, cost a great deal of money; petticoats for the girls; hats and stockings for the boys; and they must soon have new shoes, for they are almost bare-footed:—this has been a hard quarter indeed:—and only think, that slovenly boy William has run his last new shoes quite down at heel!

Curate.

Curate.—Well, don't vex yourself about it, Margaret, for I have often observed, that the boys who run their shoes down at heel, and tread their boots aside, make the best men, and often rub through life better than the cautious lad who is afraid of stepping in the dirt, lest he should spoil them.

Wife.—It's very true, my dear; but only tell me, with an income as small as ours, how we are to afford it?—Now, only look what a miserable condition your morning-gown is in; by continually working in the garden in it, you have quite spoiled it. You must have a new one soon.

Curate.—To be sure, it seems a little the worse for wear; but for the future I will take more care of it, for I'll always pull it off when I water the flowers; it will last a little longer then.

Wife.

Wife.—Do so! We must endeavour to draw in, in every thing as much as possible; for only consider,—dear times, a small income, we no longer young, and six children all unprovided for—should you be taken from us, what will become of us?

Curate, (with a sigh.)—Do not let us anticipate misfortunes, my dear Margaret; we have hitherto endeavoured to do our duty as well as we were able; let us continue to do so; and for the future trust on him who clothes the lilies of the field.

Wife.—I do so, as well as I am able; but nevertheless, anxious care frequently forces itself on my mind. I often think, when I am alone, how partially the gifts of fortune are dispensed: many live in ease and affluence, and are able to lay by fortunes for their family,

mily, whilst we have barely enough to satisfy our wants.

Curate.—We feel where our shoe pinches, but its impossible for us to know what cause of discontent others have. Does riches alone make its possessors happy ? Let us mind our own affairs, without troubling our heads about our neighbours'. And pray, what cause have we hitherto had to complain ? did we ever go hungry or thirsty to bed ? or can any one say we are in their debt ? The materials that compose our dress may be coarse, and their form plain, but they are tight and comfortable ; and I defy any one to say, that they ever saw any part of our family clad in trumpery gewgaws, or rags. 'Till now we with reason have lived content with our situation ; let us continue to do so ; and when we die, our children will find enough to bury us, and keep them

them from starving, till they are able to earn their own bread. I am convinced that neither you nor I should have been as happy as we are, had we been rich; for, to make a proper use of riches, a different disposition than either yours or mine is necessary. And what we give to the poor, we may reckon amongst our savings; our children, perhaps, will reap the benefit of it: for charity, my dear Margaret, is like the seed we strew on a piece of land we suppose barren, and which, contrary to our expectation, sometimes produces more fruit, than that which we cultivated with the hope of its rewarding our toil with a plentiful harvest.

Wife.—It's very true; but one must be careful for all that. I often think of Stilner's family; what a lucrative place he has; and twice they have had large legacies left them. They have every thing in abundance; their house

house is so well furnished, and their girls always so fashionably and well dressed, whilst our poor Rosina—

Curate, (interrupting her)—Looks like a humble violer, compared to a gaudy tulip.—But the simple flower that springs up wild in the valley, often contains more intrinsic worth, than the hot-house plant that's reared with the greatest care; for the former is often sought by the skilful physician, who extracts a salutary medicine from it; whilst the latter is admired for a moment, and then thrown aside to wither and fade; let that satisfy you:—Besides, it is impossible for us to know how Stilner's circumstances are: when we visit them we are shewn into the best room; and one sometimes finds elegance in a drawing-room, when litter, dirt, and even want, are in possession of the rest of the house.

Wife.

Wife.—But that's not their case—No! no!
they succeed in every thing they undertake.

Curate.—Not in their flowers, I'm sure ;
they look poor and miserable enough ;—I
saw them the day before yesterday ;—his car-
nations are nothing compared to mine—no-
thing at all—many of them are withered for
want of water ; others full of insects ; and all
of them in a very bad condition ;—they'll
come to nothing.

Wife.—But their harvest was more abun-
dant than ours ; their corn is better ; their
flax finer ; and the sun always shines the day
they dry their linen ; they only need to hold
out their hands, something is sure to fall into
them. But how ugly the eldest girl is ! She
is hardly eighteen, and I declare she looks as
yellow and shrivelled as our ironing-blanket ;

big

they

they may bleach her long enough before she will be fair.

Curate.—You know, Margaret, I detest whatever resembles spite or envy ; you will, therefore, oblige me to go into the garden immediately, if you continue to talk in this manner.

Wife.—Well, don't be angry, and I'll say no more about them.—But I can't bear that girl ; she is a compound of pride and vanity ; she hardly spoke to Rosina the last time we were there.

Curate.—It's amazing to me that you can vex yourself about nothing. If she did not speak to Rosina, Rosina had no occasion to listen to, nor answer her : and as for a little vanity, that's what one can easily excuse in a girl

girl of eighteen. Nay, Margaret ! I always think you seem better pleased with yourself, when you wear your blue-and-white brocaded wedding gown, than when you are in your every day dress ; and, I believe, if we were to examine the matter strictly, we should find, that even few men pass a looking-glass without peeping in it.—Vanity is the inheritance mother Eve transmitted to all her descendants : we are all more or less infected with it, and I fear, for the same cause that our first parents sought a covering.—Am I not in the right !

Wife.—I believe you are. But only think of 'squire Mildmay ! Rosina saw him several times last winter, during the time she was at your sister's ; and yesterday, when she was in town, she says she met him, and that he spoke very civilly to her : and Rosina says he is a

very

very handsome, learned, and well-behaved young man, about thirty ; the prince is very fond of him, and who knows if he may not be Privy-counsellor some time or other ; besides, Rosina says, he has two very rich old aunts.

Curate.—Rich old aunts are a blessing we ought to thank God for.

Wife. Rosina says he has a handsome house, very well furnished, a great deal of plate, and—

Curate.—Very fine flowers ; but he is particularly fortunate in having a curious and complete collection of carnations—the finest in town. I have often intended to call at his house and see them, for I am told he is pleased at people's doing so ;—but I am afraid

afraid to trust myself; for if his flowers are really finer than mine, who can tell but mine may cease to give me the pleasure they do now, and I thereby deprive myself of (I hope) an innocent amusement;—for that reason, I think it is wisest to stay away.

Wife.—Mildmay has been at Stilner's three times within this last fortnight; and I hear he is going to marry the eldest girl.

Curate.—That will be a good thing for her and her father too,—who can then get seeds and plants from his son-in-law; and I am sure he is very much in want of them.

Wife.—Alas! they are luckier than we in every thing. Rosina is almost one and twenty, and no prospect.

Curate.—No prospect of her marrying, I suppose you mean to say. Margaret! Margaret! how often have I endeavoured to cure you of this fault—the greatest, and, I believe, the only one you have, of plaguing yourself with unnecessary fears, and meeting troubles half way. Before the fruits of the earth are in bloom, you terrify yourself by imagining they may be destroyed by blight or hail; and you apprehend scarcity, when every thing promises abundance. You are one of those persons that love to multiply troubles;—but it is your disposition, and I suppose you cannot help it. Your sex is in general more thoughtful than ours, and more careful in providing for futurity; I therefore do not blame you;—I only wish to correct a fault, which, in time, may degenerate into thanklessness and discontent. Now, pray what reason has Rosina to complain or to be dissatisfied

tisfied with her situation? she is as healthy as a flower, and as cheerful as a bird that sings from morn to night;—I am sure she does not desire to leave her father's house. Did she ever tell you she wished to marry?

Wife.—Girls never say they wish to marry.

Curate.—That you must certainly know better than I. But I am not afraid of Rosina's getting a husband;—every body says she is pretty.

Wife.—They that think otherwise must be blind;—but I believe the young men don't see very clearly now a days: some of them spoil their eyes with reading, and others find more charms in bags of gold than in merit or beauty.

Curate.—His taste must be depraved, indeed, that does not receive more pleasure from the sight of a sparkling eye, or rosy lip, than from a cankered dollar, or battered ducat; and I declare, old as I am, the sight of beauty still warms and animates my heart almost as much as the retrospection of the happy days of youth does. Beauty seems to me to be an approving thought of the Almighty's, made visible to his creatures, as the satisfaction of an earthly parent is expressed by the smile on his countenance. His heart must be composed of hard materials, indeed, that beauty and innocence has not the power of moving. But, for all that, we must not be unjust,—a pretty mouth may empty a full plate, without being able to fill an empty one; and he that has none but empty ones, does right not to overlook entirely the article of fortune. But Rosina is

is such a worthy girl, that she would get a husband even if she was ugly :—she has never yet given us any just cause of vexation ;—she is industrious, good-tempered, and attentive —the first up of a morning, and the last of the family that goes to bed at night. I am sure I am not impatient for her to leave us; for, let her marry when she will, it will be a great loss to me ;—I shall often miss her in the garden,—for she draws up all the water out of the well for me, and assists me in planting, weeding, and watering my flowers almost every day—To be sure she is no great judge of flowers ;—for only think, she fancied this morning that my negro's head was a bastard flower ; and I am sure there is not a finer or more perfect carnation in the whole country than it is ;—and believe me, the girl who, with such attentive care, helps her father in rearing and cultivating his plants,

will be equally assiduous in the management of her family, and the nursing and educating her children. Yes, yes—Rosina deserves, and will get a good husband.

Wife.—Yes, she deserves one; but marrying is almost out of fashion now-a-days.

Curate.—He who first instituted the ceremony, will prevent its sinking into decay. Fear nothing, Margaret, but trust in God, who clothes the flower of the field.

Their discourse was interrupted by Rosina, who had been all the afternoon in the garden, coming into the room. “A charming, charming girl! happy is the man that finds such a wife—he is richer than if he had discovered the philosopher’s stone, and more fortunate than if he possessed an infallible elixir

elixir for the cure of all diseases. The persuasive eloquence of such a female penetrates the heart, and renders it susceptible of all the comforts of life;—her approving glance strengthens the arm for useful labour; her kiss, like magic, changes the dreary desert into a garden of Eden; and, kindled by her hand, the least flame on our little hearth blazes high, and lovely as the burning of incense on the altar.”

Rosina entered the room with all the graces of innocence—lovely as the chimera of perfection, that presents itself to the sleeping fancy of uncorrupted youth. Good sense and vivacity were strongly marked on every feature of her expressive countenance; and had a poet or painter adorned the ideal form his fancy created, with every ornament of meekness, purity, constancy, and affability,

he would have found his ideal realized in the mild and benignant glances of her hazel eyes, to which the long silky lashes afforded an inexpressible shade of softness. Health and content glowed on her cheeks; on her lips, modesty and reserve;—her dress was chosen by frugality, made by simplicity, and put on by neatness.

“ I believe I have drawn water enough, my dear father,” said she; “ when shall we begin to water the flowers?”

“ Towards evening,” was his reply—“ when the sun has warmed the water a little;”—and he was just going to add some particular orders about the flowers, when, happening to look towards the window, he espied a genteel young man galloping towards the opposite public-house; he alighted there, gave his horse to the landlord, and walked

walked towards the parsonage as fast as he could. "Who is he?" said the Curate.

Rosina started as soon as she saw him; and, with a trembling voice, said, "It is Mr. Mildmay—I believe he is coming here."—But, although taken unawares, she did not slip through the back door to alter her dress, as most girls would have done in her place.

"Now, perhaps, I shall be able to find out if the report of his marrying Stilner's girl is true," thought the mother; "and I'll ask him to give me some of his seeds and plants," thought the father;—but I don't know what Rosina's thoughts were,—but her confusion shewed they were engaged on some interesting subject,—for her knitting almost dropped out of her hand, and her cheeks alternately changed from pale to crimson;—

the transition was as quick as when a sudden gust of wind blows about red and white rose leaves we have placed in the sun to dry.

These inward sensations continued to occupy the minds of our friends long after Mr. Mildmay had entered the room, which he did in a graceful, easy manner; and he seemed extremely pleased at the friendly reception he met with: he apologised for the abruptness of his visit, which he said was owing to his desire to see the Curate's flowers, as he had heard them very much commended.

That worthy man was too much flattered by this excuse to doubt the truth of it; he therefore began a long dissertation on the beauty of his flowers, which he continued, notwithstanding his guest often shewed visible

ble signs of inattention; but, when once mounted on his hobby-horse, it was no easy matter to make him alight from it. He declared some of his carnations to be the most curious and rare of their kind:—much was said of his Bizardes, Ribbon-flower, and Negro's-head; which being appellations the Curate had invented, he found some little difficulty to make Mildmay comprehend what he meant by them; but he repeated his information as often, and with as much energy and emphasis, and endeavoured to impress it on the mind of his hearer, as forcibly as an adept in the sciences does, the technical terms of them to a learner.

The repeated panegyrics bestowed on the flowers, at last afforded Mildmay an opportunity of begging he might be allowed to see them. The Curate gladly consented;

and as the old lady desired he would excuse her accompanying him, he offered Rosina his arm, and said he hoped she would shew him the way into the garden. She accepted it; and her father keeping close to Mildmay's side, continued the former discourse,—which, however, was but little attended to by him.

As soon as the children, who were playing in the garden, saw a stranger enter it, they ran to meet him with pots of rosemary, cypress, and sweet-briar in their hands, and were not a little delighted at the notice he took, and the praise he bestowed on their exotics,—that, in their opinion, were plants of the greatest value: and they were not a little proud that, owing to their care, their nurslings throve so well, and had attained such a degree of perfection, altho' most of them were

were in a state of decay, and had for months been dying a lingering death. But it is impossible to express the innate satisfaction that glowed on the Curate's countenance, when he led his visitor to his bed of carnations ; nor the eloquence with which he related the rise and progress of each favourite ; nor the perspicuity with which he pointed out each separate beauty. He could not have commended them with more transport, nor have endeavoured to excuse or account for their defects, or what to him appeared such, had the carnations been the work of his own hands.

Mildmay was too polite not to join with him in praising those he approved, and excusing those he censured, by saying, that fancy constituted beauty, and that judges of flowers were often guided in their choice of them, by fancy more than taste.

The Curate, easily persuaded of what he wished, continued the theme, till Mildmay's inattention became too visible even to escape his notice; but he, who always judged with candour instead of attributing it to rudeness, concluded that business of consequence occupied his thoughts.

They returned to the house. Some rural refreshments were offered, which Mildmay accepted, on condition that the family would honour him with a visit the next day. "I must now have the pleasure of shewing you my flowers," said he; "and I hope you will allow me to send a carriage to-morrow morning to fetch you to town, at any hour you will please to appoint. You will do me the favour of dining with me, that you may have time to look at my flowers, fix on those you chuse to take with you, and such as you may wish

wish to have plants of in the autumn; and (continued he, turning to Rosina) I hope you remember what you promised me just now;—you seem to be fond of flowers, and I flatter myself you will find mine not quite unworthy your notice; I therefore depend on the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow."

The Curate and his wife had accepted the invitation, but they made many objections to their daughter's being of the party; saying, some family business, that could not well be deferred, made it necessary for her to stay at home. But as Mildmay would take no denial, they at last consented, on his promising not to detain them longer than was perfectly convenient to themselves.

" That seems to be a very worthy young man," said the Curate, as soon as he returned
from

from conducting his guest to the gate. "To-morrow I shall see his flowers; and what a number of seeds and plants I shall have next autumn."

"I like him very much," replied his wife; "but he was so reserved, that I could not find an opportunity of saying a word about Stilner's girl;—perhaps I may succeed better to-morrow."

"A charming man!" thought Rosina. But her heart beat quicker, and a sigh escaped her palpitating bosom at that moment.

"Then he was inviting you, I find, when he whispered to you in the garden," said the Curate. "I thought he was saying something about my flowers; he seemed particularly pleased with the flame-coloured—I believe he would be glad to have it. I really thought he was talking about the carnations.—he looked so earnestly at them."

Rosina.

Rosina.—He said something about them; but—

Curate.—A very good sort of a man, indeed—civil, without teasing one with compliments. I like him very much, for he seems to be neither proud nor conceited;—and with how much respect he mentioned the clergy!

Wife.—He is a very sensible man, I am sure, and I dare say a good œconomist. Did you remark with how much attention he listened whilst I was telling him how I managed our family?

Rosina.—And how affected he seemed when you told him of old Watson's long illness; and with how much earnestness he inquired

inquired if he was in need of pecuniary assistance.

Curate.—Yes, yes! I believe him to be a worthy man—only he seems to be a little too much attached to the customs of the world, and the follies of fashion.

Rosina.—What makes you think so, my dear father?

Curate.—Because, in compliance with fashion, he condemned what was formed by the hand of nature; for, altho' in general he did justice to my flowers, yet I found two or three did not entirely please him; for my ash-coloured carnation, with yellow stripes, he said ought only to have been striped without the specks; and the red and white speckled one ought to have had the specks without the stripes.

stripes. Now that, in my opinion, was wrong; for, as nature formed both specks and stripes, they must be right, and placed just where they ought to be:—but, now-a-days, every one must be correcting and improving, till they spoil by art what was formed perfect. A few years ago, did not the women make perfect frights of themselves,—with their breast-works and their fortifications—their pads and cushions, behind and before; and do they not still cripple themselves, and ruin their health and beauty, with their small shoes, and tight-lacing; and for no other reason, than because it is not the fashion to remain as nature formed them. The specks and stripes in my carnations are natural—they at least are not spoiled by art!

Rosina.—I suppose he meant connoisseurs would have preferred their being as he described;

described ; and as we have never seen any of the kind, we cannot tell if they may not be handsomer than ours.

Curate.—Well, well—we shall see his to-morrow, and then we shall be able to judge better.

Nothing was talked of or thought on during the evening but their late agreeable guest; their intended visit to him the next day; the preparations necessary to make for it, and the different idea of pleasure each supposed they should receive. The subject was too agreeable to Rosina for her to wish to change it: she listened and talked with visible pleasure; and several times when another was started, she, unperceived, contrived to renew the former one. To do so was not very difficult; for the mention of the business

business that must now be deferred, and the inconvenience of going out the next day, was sufficient to lead it into its old channel.

"It is really unlucky," said she, "that we are invited out to-morrow;—to be sure, now we have promised, we must go; but any other day would have been much more convenient, for now we shall be forced to put off our ironing till next week; but it cannot be helped now."

Thus we sometimes enumerate the faults of a beloved object, and think, by doing so, we shall conceal from others, perhaps from ourselves, how dear it is to us.

That the carriage came at the appointed time the next morning; that the mother was ready an hour before it arrived; that Rosina got

got up before her usual time, and had bestowed rather more pains than common on her dress; and that the Curate had visited his garden, and gathered some flowers, by way of comparison, are things of course:—as are, that Mildmay gave his guests the most kind and friendly reception; that his attentions were more pleasing to them than the elegant breakfast and various refreshments he offered; that the Curate was as much at his ease as if he had been seated in his arm-chair by his own fireside; that his wife, with a sigh, often thought of Stilner's daughter, who, she supposed, would soon call all these blessings hers; and that the polite Mildmay was not the less agreeable to Rosina for the affluence and elegance that was visible in every part of his house. It is impossible to say, if the particular attentions shewn her did not sometimes encourage her to indulge

a wish;

a wish; but, if they did, it was suppressed as soon as formed, by the recollection of its being improper and assuming, in her situation.

It was many years since the worthy curate had passed such an agreeable morning; but his pleasure was considerably increased when they went into the garden; for there, under an awning that shaded them from the sun, stood long rows of carnations and other flowers, in blooming beauty and majestic pride: Long did his eye wander over the whole collection, undetermined which he should admire first, or most; for pleasure and surprize alternately filled his mind. After some time he regained composure enough to examine the flowers separately; he spoke but little, for he had too much to see and admire, to allow him to make many observations; but, at different times,

times, the following ejaculations escaped him : No ! I never in my life saw any to compare to these ! here the greatest artist must fail in his attempt to imitate nature ; for who can equal what the hand of the Almighty has formed ?—He was so lost in contemplation of the beauteous objects before him, that he could not be prevailed on to leave them, and stood gazing with ever new delight, during the time Mildmay led his wife and daughter about the garden ; but, as often as they approached him, he called to them to observe some new beauty he had just discovered ; and once, when Mildmay was speaking to Rosina, he seized his wife's hand, and drew her towards the flowers : “ Look, Margaret !” said he, “ did you ever see any thing so lovely ? I wish our poor boys were here ; how delighted they would be ; I am sorry they miss this fine sight. If our old thrasher was here,

how

how he would stare ; he is often surprised at my flowers ; what would he say if he was to see these ?—No ! my carnations won't bear comparing to them ; except indeed my flame-colour,—don't you think mine is brighter ? but this, to be sure, is much larger : I did not think it possible to have such a collection.—I often dream of flowers ; but, neither sleeping or waking, did I ever see any equal in beauty to these : and, I am to have some of each sort ! for I heard him tell the gardener just now, to pick out the best for us to take with us, and to send the others to-morrow. Good God ! how pleased the children will be when they see them !” During the time the old people were engaged with the flowers, the young ones had been walking about the garden ; but the curate's mind was too much engaged to notice their absence, and he supposed, if he thought of them at

all, that Rosina, at least, had been standing near him all the time. He was, therefore, not a little surprized to see her and Mildmay coming down the walk towards them;—the latter offered the mother his arm to conduct her to dinner, which, he said, was on the table.

Those of my readers, whose tastes are domestic enough to read this simple story without tiring, will allow me to add,—that the dinner was excellent, and that the company sat almost two hours at table. The Curate found every thing incomparably good; his wife, notwithstanding she prided herself not a little on her skill in the culinary art, did the same; but she comforted herself with the thought, that, had she as good materials, she should be able to cook as well.—Mildmay and Rosina, ate but little, and yet they did not

not rise hungry from table ;—this may, perhaps, appear enigmatical to many ; and I don't know if I should be good-natured enough to explain the reason of it so soon, if the time that is to separate our new friends was not very near.

The carriage was ordered to be at the door in a quarter of an hour ; the flower-pots were set in readiness at the hall-door, where the Curate had visited them several times; each time renewing his instruction to the gardener, how to place them, that they might not be damaged by the jolting of the coach.

“ You are in such a hurry to be gone, my dear friends,” said Mildmay, in a hesitating manner, at the same time taking a hand of each of the old people, “ you hurry so—and I have a favour—a very great favour to beg

of you before you leave me."—"I—I suppose," interrupted the Curate, "you wish to have my flame-coloured carnation? I'll give it you with pleasure."—"Ah! Sir," replied Mildmay, "it is a treasure of infinitely greater value I wish to deprive you of—no less than your amiable daughter:—by her referring me to you this morning, I am willing to flatter myself with the hope of not being quite indifferent to her; I therefore beg you bestow her on me."—"That I will with all my heart!" stammer'd the Curate, in a tone of voice joy made almost inarticulate, and tears rolled down his cheeks as he spoke.—"Then my every wish is fulfill'd," said Mildmay: "You will be my father:—Dare I, Madam, call you by an appellation equally dear?"

She

She gladly consented ; but, in the fulness of her heart said, she was greatly surprized, as she had heard he was going to marry Miss Stilner. " Then the idle tale has likewise reached your ears, I find," replied Mildmay. " A money affair, which Stilner's deranged circumstances made me apprehend not quite in safe hands, was the cause of my recent visits to him ;—at some future period I will explain it to you ; but, at present, my mind is too much engaged to waste more time on the subject :—let me rather employ it in thanking you for the happiness you have bestowed on me, and in assuring you of my eternal gratitude."

He was silent, but his eyes continued the subject, and with his handkerchief he wiped away a tear that stole down Rosina's cheek. The father and mother look'd at each other

with innate satisfaction for some moments, when the Curate, recollecting himself, took his daughter's hand, and presenting it to Mildmay, said, " May the Almighty bestow his richest blessings on you, my dear son and daughter: may health and happiness be your constant attendants through life: may every domestic comfort bloom as fresh about you as beds of new blown flowers, and prove as sweet, but less fading."

Mildmay now folded his much-loved Rosina to his heart, and, with a kiss, assured himself of the reality of his bliss; her parents did the same, and there was no end of embraces and congratulations. But, as scenes of this kind will not bear describing, I will pass it over silently; and only say, that the sight of the young people's happiness seemed to renew the old one's youth; for they felt as happy

happy as they were the day their parents joined their hands.

" You see, my dear Margaret," said the worthy Curate, " I was in the right, when I said, the Almighty would never forsake us : Rosina is now better provided for, than our most sanguine wish allowed us to expect ; and we have acquired a friend (shaking Mildmay's hand) who will be the comfort and prop of our declining age. Let us, in future, continue to trust in him who clothes the flowers, and feeds the sparrows. Blessed be his name for ever !—And now, Margaret, it is high time to think of returning home."

THE ROBBER.

(*Found amongst the papers of a gentleman deceased.*)

IN the early part of life, family business obliged me to visit an uncle who lived in Bohemia; and, without meeting with either accident or adventure, I arrived safe at his seat, which was situated in the most remote and mountainous part of that kingdom.— Whilst there, walking was almost my only amusement; and seldom did an evening pass without my rambling several leagues. In one of my strolls, I was benighted in a forest that lay between my uncle's estate and an immense chain of mountains. A quick succession

cession of ideas had crowded themselves on my mind ; the thought of my native country, the dear and tender ties that attached me to it, and the recollection of the many friends I had left there, had so occupied my thoughts, as to allow me to pay but little attention to the objects that surrounded me ; and I was disagreeably roused from my pleasing reverie, by finding myself almost in the dark, in a part of the wood I was totally unacquainted with. My situation was really unpleasant ; for, instead of succeeding in my endeavours to discover the right path, every step I took led me deeper into the wood. After wandering about some time, I thought I heard a noise like the sound of human footsteps, at some distance from me : I called as loud as I was able, and was agreeably surprised, a few moments after, by seeing a man coming towards me. As soon as he perceived me, he en-

quired what I wanted ? I told him I had lost my way ; and, naming my uncle, begged he would shew me to the path which led to his house. He paused a moment, and then said, " You are at a great distance from it ; to conduct you there, at present, is not in my power :" and, after another pause, he continued, " If you are not afraid to repose under my roof, follow me."—I, without hesitating, accepted his offer, and followed him into the thickest part of the forest. During our walk I asked him several questions ; he answered none of them, but walked with hasty strides, silent, and seemingly lost in thought. At last he stopped, and, turning to me, said, " You are but lately come into this part of Bohemia."—" I have not been in it long," was my reply ; " but who told you so?"—" Yourself!"—I stood still, and looking at him with amazement, said, " I told

told you!"—"Yes!" was his answer; "for if you had not been a stranger, you would have known this wood to be the hiding place of a band of thieves; are you not afraid of them?"—"Why should I fear them?" said I; "the trifles I have about me is hardly worth their acceptance; but, if they desire it, they are welcome to it; nor do I suppose the life of a defenceless person to be in danger."—"Fear nothing, young man!" replied he; "the robbers that inhabit this wood are not murderers."

After walking a considerable time in the closest part of the forest, he stopped, and, after he had removed some boughs of trees that lay on the ground, I perceived a habitation, at the door of which he knocked three times. A hoarse voice, from within, enquired who was at the door? "A son of darkness,"

was my guide's reply. The door was immediately opened by a man, whose aspect was truly terrific. He entered, and I followed him into a large room, the walls of which were painted black, and ornamented with different sorts of weapons and fire-arms ; a few chairs, and two tables, composed the whole of its furniture ; one of the tables was covered with a white cloth, and on it lay a human skull.—

"The room is cold, Jacob," said my conductor, "light the fire, and lay a cover for this gentleman, my friend."—The wood blazed on the hearth a few minutes after ; he shook my hand, and desired me to place myself near the fire ; I did so, and he seated himself opposite me.

The dim glimmering of the lamp had hitherto prevented my observing, as I wished, the person, who (without alarming me) had
so

so greatly excited my curiosity ; but the sparkling of the faggots gave me an opportunity of doing so, and my wonder was not a little encreased, on my finding him one of the handsomest men I had ever seen ; though on whose every feature was stamped an expression of sorrow ; or, to speak more properly, heart-piercing anguish.

Respect and surprise alternately filled my mind, before I had been in his company a quarter of an hour ; for never had I met with a man whose understanding was more enlightened, mind more enlarged, or in whom learning and talents were more happily combined. I purposely changed the subject several times ; but every one I started seemed to be that which had engrossed the most of his time and attention. We were interrupted by a clock, that stood in an adjoining room,

striking

striking twelve, and, a moment after, the report of a pistol made me start. "That's our summons to dinner," said he; "for night is our day, and day to us is night:—you will be obliged," continued he, "to eat with the refuse of mankind to night—with a band of robbers—but you have no cause of fear:—often do greater villains sit at monarchs' tables—for with us the duties of hospitality are sacred."

He arose, again shook my hand, and I followed him to the door of his habitation,—where, under the shelter of some old moss-grown oaks, the cloth was laid. The company consisted of eighteen persons, besides my friend, who I soon discovered was the commander of the gang. I seated myself by him, and his politeness and attentions made me partake with pleasure of the

homely and frugal fare his table afforded. He related several adventures he had been engaged in: when he spoke, the most profound silence reigned—every one listened with respectful attention;—nor, during the repast, did I either hear or see an improper word or gesture. The conversation and manners were such as one would wish to find, but must not always expect to meet with in civilized private families.

When the meal was finished, I returned with my friend to the apartment we had left. The conversation was resumed, but not with the former cheerfulness on his part: his spirits had entirely forsaken him; and, when he spoke, gloomy misanthropy seemed to dictate his words. I expressed my surprise at the colour of his room.

"I wonder you fixed on black," said I—for black naturally excites melancholy ideas—and it is our duty to encourage cheerful ones."

"You are in the right," replied he, in a hasty, although not rude manner—"you are in the right, if you speak of yourself, or your equals; - but, as for me, I have long been a stranger to the sensations you mention—the name is all I now know of them. You wonder at the colour of these walls—the sable hue surprises you;—but know, young man, they are the colour of my fate—and oh! (clasping his hands) that it had been that of my heart!"

"A strange wish," said I.

"To you it may seem so," was his answer; "but had my heart been black, perhaps I might have been happy;—but now I am miserable—

miserable—utterably miserable :—all my riches consist in that skull."

He pointed to it as he spoke, and his whole frame was convulsed.

"It is my all!" continued he; "and the only comfort I now enjoy, is to contemplate and fold it to my bosom. Thus shalt thou likewise rest! is the thought that at such moments fill my mind; then I am rich and happy—richer than monarchs, and happier than their greatest favourites ;—they lose by what I gain; and the thought of death, that is dreadful to them, is comfort to me. To sleep never to awake again—glorious thought! How often do I reflect on, how often anticipate the moment, when I shall rest in peace, and no longer feel the fangs of the vulture that now incessantly

santly preys on my unhappy heart. He that robs me of the thought of annihilation, robs me of my present happiness! There are moments when I think the loss of reason would be the greatest blessing that could befall me:—I own the thought is dreadful, and what, in former days, I should have supposed impossible for any mind to cherish; but what idea is too dreadful for deep-rooted despair to suggest? Sorrow and misfortunes—such as I have experienced—furrow the brow with deeper wrinkles than the hand of time—but, alas! they do not kill.”

The clock struck two as he pronounced the last words: he started and said, “ Is it so late?—forgive me, stranger,” continued he, in a more composed manner—“ forgive me for depriving you of repose so long. In that room you will find my bed prepared for you—

you—good night—sleep without fear—no harm will happen to you.”

I seized his right hand as he turned from me, and said, “I cannot leave you;—pardon the curiosity your words have excited, and let me intreat of you to add to the other favours you have conferred on me—that of relating the account of your life and misfortunes—depend on my discretion.”

But how severely did I repent my imprudent request, when I saw the conflict that passed in his mind;—every limb trembled, his features were distorted, and his aspect was that of personified despair.

“ My history!” said he, with a ghastly smile, “ will hardly have the power to lull you into a gentle slumber; it is of so horrid a nature,

a nature, that it will rather make your flesh crawl—your hair stand erect with horror; and let me not, to my other crimes, add that of violating the laws of hospitality. As far as I can contribute towards it, you shall sleep, undisturbed, under my roof;—but, before we part to-morrow morning I will gratify your desire. My history is short—few are the events it contains; but those few——”

He turned from me as he spoke: I left the room, and threw myself on the bed; but was too much agitated to sleep. I passed a restless, uneasy night;—sometimes I fancied I heard a confused sort of noise in the house, which was immediately hushed again; but, in the perturbed state my mind was in, it is very probable imagination operated on it. I counted the lingering moments till the clock struck five; and then, unable to contain myself

self any longer, I started from my bed, and opened the door. My benefactor (for such I shall ever think him) was seated near the fire-place, with his eyes riveted on the almost extinguished embers.

" You have not slept," said he, as soon as he saw me ; " is rest for ever banished from this abode ? "

He desired me to be seated :—I drew a chair near his ; and soon after breakfast was brought in, which I gladly partook of : we talked about indifferent things till the clock struck seven,—when I arose, and taking my hat and cane, was preparing to take leave; for not the wealth of both Indias would have bribed me to have reminded him of his promise, or to have hinted at any thing that could recall it to his mind.

"I see you are going to quit me," said he.

"I do so reluctantly," was my answer; "but I fear my absence will alarm my relations."

"That it certainly will; for they know how dangerous this wood is," said he—"I will therefore only detain you a few minutes longer."

He then ordered Jacob to saddle two horses; and, after desiring me to resume my seat, addressed me in the following words; but the awful and emphatic manner of his pronouncing them penetrated my very soul:—

"I will now, young man, fulfil the promise I made you last night;—the effort is great but a promise is sacred. You, and
you

you alone, shall be informed of the unfortunate events of my life; and, when you have heard them, I am certain your sympathising heart will pity, rather than despise, the wretched relator.

“ I am the only son of one of the first nobles of this kingdom: my father was immensely rich; and, as I was his only heir, no cost was spared on my education; and, I believe I may say without vanity, the sums expended on me were not spent in vain. I will pass over in silence the first years of my life;—they cannot interest you, as they contain nothing new or material, and begin my relation when, as a youth, I left the university.

“ As soon as I had finished my studies, I was particularly distinguished by my monarch;
and

and my advancement from one post to another was so rapid, that, after I had been at court a few years, I had the flattering prospect of soon becoming one of the first ministers of the state.

“ Unbounded ambition dwelt in my father’s heart: he loved me, or at least I thought he did, till I was fatally undeceived, by finding, what I supposed parental affection, only gratified pride. Thus was I placed, surrounded by the most dazzling prospects that my youthful heart in fancy had suggested; for, at that time, I proudly thought I had attained the summit of human happiness. Fatal security! how soon was I undeceived! for little do we short-sighted mortals know one moment what will beset us the next.

“ Through

" Through chance I became acquainted with a lovely girl, whose rank was much inferior to mine. To see and love was the same thing; and that unaccountable passion, which has whirled many able statesmen and brave warriors from the highest pitch of glory and renown, likewise proved my bane.

" At first, such was the pride of birth, I thought myself authorised to subdue her virtue, and various were the attempts I made for that purpose; but she repulsed them all with scorn and indignation.

The difficulties I met with, instead of abating, inflamed my passion still more; which at last was so violent, as to make me determine to ask my father's consent to marry her. At first he laughed at me; but, on my persevering in my request, and throwing

myself at his feet, he arose—spurned me from him—and, in a cool, contemptuous manner, asked me if I was mad. ‘What!’ said he, foaming with rage, which almost rendered his words inarticulate, “Do you think I will ever consent to call a strumpet, you have chosen from the dregs of the people, daughter? No! rather would I see you at the gallows than at the altar with her.”

“I knew the inflexibility of my father’s disposition too well to entertain a hope of ever gaining his consent: I was therefore silent, and left the room in a state of mind impossible to describe. In such a situation, what was I to do? What prudence dictated, was to conquer my passion; and, in the calmer hours, when reason asserted her power over my mind, I determined to do so; but how

how seldom is reason able to subdue a youthful heart glowing with love !

“ My visits to her were less frequent; but each time I saw her, my passion increased, and the conflicts that passed in my bosom for six months, between ambition, duty, and love, were violent indeed. Love, as you will suppose, was at last victor. I fled with Teresa to one of the remotest parts of the kingdom. A curate joined our hands; and, with the money I had taken with me, I purchased a small farm. There, in my humble cot, supported by the labour of my hands, with the object of my undivided affection, my wife—my loved Teresa, I tasted happiness to me unknown before;—happiness far exceeding that a monarch’s diadem, or hero’s laurels, can bestow! But begone, recollection! let me hasten over this scene.

“ A year after our marriage, I clasped a boy—a charming boy! in my arms,—who, in my partial eyes, was lovely as a cherub. My every wish was now fulfilled, and two years longer did I drink large draughts out of the cup of human happiness—Hymeneal and parental happiness.

“ One evening, as I returned from the chace, I was surprised to see a carriage standing near our gate: I hurried into the house, and found my father with my wife. ‘ Son, I have forgiven thee,’ said he, as soon as he saw me,” “ and am come to share the gifts fortune has bestowed on me with you and her.’

“ Teresa threw herself at his feet, and clasped his knees: my boy was in his arms, and, with infantine fondness, stroked his face, and

and kissed his cheek,—whilst I, with almost frantic transport, alternately pressed him, my wife, and child, to my bosom. Now, I thought I could say, with truth, nothing is wanting to make my happiness complete—my heart was penetrated with gratitude and filial love.

“ But forgive me, stranger, I can proceed no further:—three days after, my wife and child died by poison my inhuman father administered to them; and—and, on the fourth, that father died by a dagger this hand plunged into his heart.—Farewell, stranger.”

He pressed my hand as he spoke, and a torrent of tears, that rushed from his large blue eyes, witnessed the truth of his relation.

"Once more, farewell!" continued he—
"that—that was my wife's skull."

Unable to answer him, I was going to leave the room—but I stopped at the door, and, turning to him, said, "Can nothing prevail on you to return into the world again?"

"Nothing," replied he; "for the grave contains all that was dear to me in it;—besides, here I am of some use—there I should be of none; for those I command love and fear me:—now they only rob, but without me they would murder."

I left him with sensations I am unable to express.—One of his people conducted me to the end of the forest, and soon after I arrived safe at my uncle's house.

The

This adventure has made a deep and lasting impression on my mind, and has ever prevented my judging with too much severity the actions of others, particularly of those I am not intimately acquainted with; for, did we know the true cause of them, many we so unfeelingly condemn, nay, sometimes the greatest criminals not excepted, would, instead of our abhorrence, meet with our pity.

THE APRIL FOOL.

IN one of the gayest towns in the German empire, lived, quite in his own way, a rich old bachelor. In his youth he had been, what the French called, a *bon-vivant*, the English, a *rake*: his father had intended him for the bar; but, just as he had finished his studies, the old gentleman made his exit, and the young one, not supposing it possible to spend so large a fortune, lived in the most splendid and dissipated manner, without troubling his head about the dry study of jurisprudence. Indeed he had plenty of other busines~~s~~

business to occupy his thoughts, for he was always in pursuit of some fair maid, wife, or widow, that lived in his neighbourhood ; but, as he was too much a man of honour to boast of his conquests, it is not in my power to say if his attempts were successful or not ; but, perhaps, my penetrating readers may be able to determine, by the time they have read this little story.

Although the estate his father left him was large and unencumbered, yet, by the time he was on the wrong side of forty, he had so entirely dissipated it, that poverty and distress seemed to promise to be the companions of his age ; when all at once that well-known capricious female, Fortune, favoured him with a kind glance, which relieved his wants, and for ever chaced corroding care, at least of that nature, from his mind. For,

in a large trading town, at a great distance from that in which our hero lived, died an old uncle of his; where, although he had been settled many years, he had lived in so retired a manner, that nothing more was known about him, than that his name was Ziepal, and that he was immensely rich.— Yet, little as the world had troubled itself about the old miser, (as he was contemptuously called) during his life; yet now many would have willingly given one of their ears, to have been able to prove himself his brother, nephew, or even distant relation.— Many applications were made for that purpose, but as none were able to prove their legitimacy, and no will was to be found; his effects were sealed, and inventoried by order of the magistrates, and a citation inserted in all the foreign news-papers, to discover, if possible, the rightful heirs. The law of the country

country obliged them to do so; but it was supposed to be an idle ceremony, for they most likely neither expected nor wished any claimant to appear. But a favourable wind blew the interesting paper into our friend's hands; and he, armed with the most unequivocal and incontestible proofs of his being the true, lawful, and only heir of his deceased uncle, made his claim in person; and, after going through all the formalities the law demanded, and paying all the expences it had incurred, the remaining part of the fortune was remitted to him, which, notwithstanding the many diminutions it had suffered, might still be called a handsome one.

" Ha ! Ha !—now *da capo* will be played again—our old bachelor will begin where he left off, and be made an April Fool of by some artful female or other.—I own the title

puzzled me at first, but now I comprehend it perfectly!"

But, for once, sagacious reader, you are mistaken; for although Prudence was not the attendant of Ziepel's youth, she condescended to be the guide of his maturer years ; and he, who before was an extravagant libertine, was become a prudent, saving man. The greatest part of his money was placed out on interest, and with the rest he removed to the before-mentioned town, where he neither knew, nor was known to any person. There he bought a small, but genteel house, hired a footman, who was his only servant, and assuming the title of Counsellor Ziepel, lived, as I said before, quite in his own way.

That is, he neither received, nor paid any visits, but frequented the coffee-houses, public-walks,

lic-walks, and theatres; and, like most old sinners, he never missed going to church twice every Sunday. It was at the last mentioned place, that a pretty young woman attracted his notice:—she was tall and genteel; her dress, without being expensive, was smart and neat, and her hazel eyes, which sometimes, during a tedious sermon, were by chance directed to him, set his tender heart in a blaze.

The oftener he saw her, the more insupportable his present condition appeared to him:—The dinner his *traiteur* sent was good for nothing, and the awkwardness and insolence of his footman was no longer to be endured. “ How much happier I should be if I had a wife; she would, at least, know how to order a bit of victuals to be dressed; and I could certainly keep two maids for what that fellow costs me—but one, I think,

will

will be enough for us : I shall save something by that ! " This last idea fixed his resolution ; John was ordered to bring his gold-laced suit of brown clothes, his bag-wig, white silk stockings, and gold-headed cane ; and thus Adonised, he, with stately steps, proceeded towards the street, where the brunette that had captivated his heart lived.

Her father (a clerk in one of the public offices) received him in a manner usual on such occasions : and her mother—why every one knows how mothers behave when a rich suitor offers for a daughter, whose beauty is her only portion. But how did Miss receive him ? O dear ! that's a question I don't very well know how to answer ; civilly, I suppose ; but, I believe, the sensations she felt were not of the most agreeable nature ; for I can no longer conceal, that a genteel young man
was

was a frequent visiter at the house, who was received by the parents with friendship, and by the daughter with something more. But the poor young fellow was only placed as supernumerary in the office her father was in, and worked in hopes of being provided for some time or other; and, to complete his ill-luck, he was just gone into the country to visit his relations, where he proposed staying some weeks.

During that time Counsellor Ziepel acted like an old practitioner in the art of love, for every visit he made was accompanied by a present; perhaps a pound of scented chocolate, or Turkey coffee for mamma, or a new-fashioned fan, silk shawl, or gauze handkerchief for miss; so that his intention of striking the iron whilst it was hot, was plainly to be perceived.

Poor

Poor Ferdinand, thou little thought'ſt what would happen during the time thou waſt away; for, the very day before thy return, a ſet of china preſented to the mother, and a piece of pale pink ſatin for a jacket and petticoat to the daughter decided thy fate, and gained thy rival the triple conſent!

I have no doubt of my readers making a full ſtop at this place, to vent their spleen on Caroline, who, I ſuppoſe, they will call mercenary, giddy and inconstant. They have my permission to fay and think what they please about her; I ſhall neither blame nor excuse her conduct, but proceed in my relation, and tell them what paſſed between her and Ferdinand, the day after the deſi-
five promise had taken place.

It

It is natural to suppose, that as soon as he heard the news, so fatal to his peace, he hurried to her as fast as possible. He did so; for with impatience, equal to that a Swiss feels when returning to his native country, he hastened to Caroline's apartment. He found her alone; but it was not without some difficulty, and after gasping for breath several times, that he at last articulated these words: "For God's sake, Caroline! is it true!—are you going to be married!"—A tear glistered in her eye, and with a trembling voice she replied, "yes, Ferdinand."

"Shakespear! Shakespear! you was in the right when you said—'Frailty, thy name is woman:'—but such falsehood—such inconstancy from you, Caroline—is what I little expected."

As

“ As I never made you any promise, Ferdinand, you are to blame to accuse me in this manner.—You have hitherto been my father’s visiter ; I hope you will now share your leisure hours with him and my husband, and depend on Caroline’s remaining what she has ever been—your friend.”—

“ Really, madam, your goodness exceeds belief; but I am unworthy your bounty, and shall never make use of the permission you are pleased to grant me ; I therefore humbly take my leave of you for ever : at the same time wishing you as much happiness—as you deserve.”—

So saying, he, with a sarcastic smile and profound bow, left the room. He was followed by Caroline’s eyes, and many a chrystal drop fell from them ; for her palpitating heart

was

was forced to own the difference between the rich but emaciated Ziepel, and the poor but healthy and handsome Ferdinand, was great indeed. However, lace and ribbons, gauze and lustrings, with which her room was strewed, diverted her melancholy thoughts for a moment ; they, however, soon returned, and it is impossible to say what effect they might have had, if her cousin Louisa had not entered soon after Ferdinand left the room ; she laughed at her tears, and the idea of a beautiful lawn *chemise à la grec*, entirely dried them, and fixed her wavering resolution.

A few weeks after Caroline became Counsellor Ziepel's wife, she was invested with the supreme command of the kitchen, and wine-cellar, ; all the keys were delivered to her in a formal manner, and, at the same time, a list of the duties of her new situation recited

to

to her. Caroline heard them with patience, and determined to fulfil them—as well as she could.

Our old epicure fancied himself in heaven, when his young wife sat opposite him at table, and helped him to the best bits. Savory was the soup she had prepared ; and how delicate the pudding she had made ! Indeed, old Ziepel enjoyed a degree of domestic felicity, far exceeding his most sanguine expectation ; and Caroline, flattered by the satisfaction he expressed, was indefatigable in her endeavours to give him pleasure : each day she therefore presented him with some new dish, which was thankfully received, and greedily devoured ; and Ziepel, who fancied he had now obtained the summit of human happiness, never failed ending his morning and evening

prayer,

prayer, with the ejaculation: “Lord, take me not away in the midst of my days!”

But a heaven upon earth, although often talked about, is, I believe, rather difficult to be found in this world; and my experienced readers will know, without my telling them, that, let a garden be kept in the nicest order, a weed, or noisome plant, will now-and-then spring up in it, to plague the owner, in spite of the care he takes to prevent it: and this was exactly our old counsellor’s case; for, before he had been married two months, behold! there was Ferdinand, who, during that interval, had maturely reflected how difficult it is to swim against the tide, and that what was done could not be altered: besides, Madame Ziepel’s last words—“Depend on Caroline’s remaining, what she has ever been—your friend!” now became a source of comfort

fort to him ; and the repetition of the words was as harmonious to the ear, as the sound of them had formerly been discordant. There could be no harm, he thought, in venturing one visit, in which he should be able to judge if she intended keeping her promise or not.

To Ziepel's house therefore he went, but, assured as he was before he entered it, he could not entirely conceal the embarrassment he felt, when he was shewn into the room where Caroline and her husband was sitting : but women seldom lose their presence of mind on such occasions ; she therefore received him with the greatest ease, and taking his hand, presented him to her husband as a near relation of hers, a young man of the most unexceptionable character, who was a daily visiter at her father's. Old Ziepel was not a little surprized, and not very well

pleased, at the arrival of his new cousin; he cast a scrutinizing glance at him, which increased his fears; for this old friend of his wife appeared to be about four-and-twenty, and the sins he had committed at that age started fresh into his mind.

Disagreeable as this visiter was to him, decency obliged him to behave with civility, which he did; but with a coolness and reserve that, he hoped, would prevent his repeating his visit: he was a silent spectator of all that passed; but the circumstance of his wife's being in better spirits that evening, and laughing more than she had done since she had been married, did not fail encreasing his jealous pangs.

Ferdinand was not much encouraged by the reception his new cousin gave him; but

Caroline's

Caroline's was so kind, that it raised his hopes, and determined him to repeat his visits ; and they soon became so frequent, that an evening seldom passed without his spending some part of it in her company. As the old gentleman supped very early, and he was never invited to stay, he determined to go after it was over ; and often was he in such a hurry to be there, that he made his appearance before the cloth was removed. Louisa, Caroline's friend, was generally of the party ; and the three young people used to sing, laugh, and chat, as if old Ziepel, who always removed to the fire-side as soon as supper was over, had not been in the room. But every day his fears, and consequently his ill-humour increased ; and when Ferdinand entered the room, he would look, God forgive me ! as if he had been the devil ; for he neither trusted his cousin, his wife, nor her friend :

friend: his eyes were continually fixed on them; and if any indispensable reason obliged him to leave the room for a few minutes whilst they were together, he never failed ordering the maid to remain in it, till he returned.

Surrounded by such Argus eyes, poor Ferdinand never found an auspicious moment, to assure his beloved Caroline of his unabated affection, except by his eyes, which was a language she understood perfectly.— One kiss was all he desired; and if he sometimes found opportunity of begging she would grant his request, he was always repulsed with a laugh, and a “ pshaw! what nonsense.”— Often was the youth’s patience almost exhausted, and more than once he formed the resolution of never again beholding the object of his wishes, but Caroline’s cheerfulness,

ness, her smiles, and sometimes a gentle pressure of the hand, when he took leave, would pour fresh oil into his almost extinguished lamp of hope. “The old dragon that guards the golden fruit, will surely fall asleep some time or other,” thought he.—“Patience, perhaps I shall still be rewarded.”

Thus, with anxious impatience and disappointed expectation, passed the winter, without Ferdinand’s approaching one step nearer the attainment of his wish; for, instead of diminishing, the old man’s care and vigilance increased, and with it, the young one’s gloom and discontent.

Matters were in this state, when he went one evening to pay his accustomed visit: he found the ladies sitting at work at the table, as usual, and Ziepel in his flannel night-cap.—

A

A small table was placed before him ; a lamp and screen stood on it, and he was so much engaged with some papers, that he did not seem to notice Ferdinand's being in the room ; he got up once or twice, and went to an adjoining closet for some other papers, which he examined, and calculated with redoubled ardour.

Ferdinand took a chair and placed himself between the two ladies, who were talking about embroidery, silk and cotton, and the like interesting matters, which prevented his joining in the discourse ; he therefore, merely to have something to do, took up Louisa's work-bag, and amused himself with examining the contents of it, and finding an almanack, he opened it, and was turning over the leaves, which, as soon as Louisa perceived, she snatched it from him, saying :—

" You must not do so, young gentleman."—
" Why not ?" said he ; and at that moment
old Argus shuffled towards the closet.

Louisa.—Because there is some memoran-
dums in it I don't wish you to see.

Ferdinand.—If I had known there was any
writing in it, I would not have opened it.—
I was only going to look on what day the last
of this month falls.

Louisa.—I'll tell you—it is this day fort-
night.

Caroline.—Then to-morrow fortnight is
the first of April ; I will make an April-fool
of you, Ferdinand, that we may have some-
thing to laugh at, for I think we grow quite
stupid.

Ferdinand.

Ferdinand.—You must invent some other plan of amusement, for this will not succeed I assure you.—Now do you really fancy I shall be silly enough to let you make an April fool of me?

Caroline.—I dare say I shall succeed, in spite of your wisdom.

Ferdinand.—No! you certainly will not.

Caroline.—Will you lay a ring set with your hair that I dont?

Ferdinand.—Yes! but what will you bet against it.

Caroline.—This purse that I am netting—look! it's large enough to hold two hundred Louis d'ors—if you have them to put in it.

Ferdinand.—

Ferdinand.—You had better keep the purse for the money your husband is reckoning, and promise to give me the kiss I have so long asked you for in vain.

Caroline.—Well, I'll consent to it—here's my hand—Louisa, you are witness.

The discourse was interrupted by the creaking of the old gentleman's slippers, which announced his speedy return; and indeed, they had hardly time to settle their weighty wager, before he was again seated at his table, seemingly more intensely engaged with his papers than before. Without attending to him, the company at the other table laughed, joked, and were more noisy than usual; for, as Ferdinand's spirits were raised to the highest pitch, he related a number of stories, one more laughable than the other, and

and their mirth continued till it was time for him to conduct Louisa home.

Every time he went, he found Ziepel in his usual place, either writing, casting up, or calculating his papers, which he did with so much earnestness, that the sweat often rolled down his forehead in large drops; and one would have thought that the man of independent fortune, was all at once reduced to a poor copyist. But one evening Ferdinand was agreeably surprized to find Caroline and Louisa together, the latter more elegantly dressed than usual; but neither Ziepel, table, lamp, nor papers were to be seen.—“Why! where the devil is he?” said Ferdinand, unable to conceal astonishment.—“Hush! hush!” said Caroline, in a low voice, and pointing to the closet, “he is there—the spirit of calculation has taken possession of

him, and we disturb him with the noise we make."

Ferdinand.—I am glad of it; and if I knew who first invented numbers, I would offer two wax candles at his shrine, for the service he has done me.

Caroline.—Are you turned catholic?—But I beg of you, Ferdinand, to be serious for a few moments, as I have really something of consequence to say to you.

Ferdinand.—Speak, Sultana! your slave is all attention.

Caroline.—The many ill-natured reproaching looks I have endured on your account, Ferdinand, cannot have entirely escaped your observation; but the provoking speeches, and

and malicious insinuations I am daily forced to hear, are only known to myself; nor do I wish you to be informed of them, as I am certain you would be pained by the knowledge of what I suffer for you. But will you, Ferdinand, as the only recompence in your power to make, grant me the favour I am going to ask?

Ferdinand.—You mortify me, dearest Caroline, by doubting it. Speak, best beloved of women—be it what it will, depend on my performing it, even at the hazard of my life.

Caroline.—If the enterprize was dangerous, I would not engage you in it. Well, then, attend:—You see Louisa is dressed; she is going to a ball that's given on account of one of our friends, who was married yester-

day, and leaves this town to-morrow—perhaps for ever : I am likewise invited to the ball ; and I own there is nothing I desire so much as to partake of the amusement, and to bid farewell to a friend I love ; but my doing so, or not, depends entirely on you.

Ferdinand.—On me ! then you are certain of going ;—put on your cloak—I'll attend you there this moment.

Caroline—When one is serious, such flights are ridiculous. You know as well as I that my jealous-pated husband will never consent to my going ; but I have thought of a plan to cheat him, if you will assist in the execution of it. I can contrive to steal away, unobserved, if you will only be so good to occupy my place in bed during the time I am away.

Ferdinand.

Ferdinand, laughing.—An excellent substitute, upon my honour.

Caroline.—I assure you, Ferdinand, it is the easiest thing in the world. Before we go, we will put you on one of my night-caps and handkerchiefs; and you may depend on his never discovering the deceit;—your hat and coat we will lock up in this press; but I will put on your boots when I go out with Louisa, that he may fancy it is you going down stairs with her.

Ferdinand, staring at her.—Why surely, Caroline, you are not in earnest?

Caroline.—Indeed I am:—do, dear Ferdinand, oblige me.

Louisa.—Pray, Ferdinand, don't prevent Caroline's going.

Ferdinand.—I believe you are both mad. If your husband's breath had the power of the basilik's, it would poison me for only entering his house. Death and the devil! what will he do if he sees me in his bed?

Louisa.—But he will not see you;—if he only perceives the form of a human creature in bed, it is all that's necessary.

Ferdinand.—Do you want to persuade me he is blind?

Louisa.—No;—but as he has not got cat's eyes, he cannot see in the dark.

Caroline.

Caroline.—Once more let me beg of you, Ferdinand, to oblige me:—Do you think, if there was any probability of your being discovered, I would ask the favour of you? for do I not risque as much, nay, more than you? Let me explain it to you—you will then find how vain your fears are:—He never brings the candle with him into the room we sleep in, but puts it out in my dressing-room, which is next to it, where a lamp burns all night;—you may sleep quitely till six to-morrow morning, which is the time he usually rises; and he immediately goes into his own room to take a spoonful of an electuary he has to clear his lungs of the phlegm they have contracted during the night;—and at the moment he leaves the room at one door, I enter it at the other, to relieve you, and take your place. You will find the street door

door locked; and I suppose I need not advise you to leave the house as fast as you can.

Ferdinand.—I will do any thing you can desire rather than this; for indeed, Caroline, this enterprise is so very daring, that I foresee it will end in the ruin of us both.

Caroline.—I beg, Louisa, I may not detain you any longer; Ferdinand will conduct you to the ball. You see what dependence we ought to place on the promises of men—ask a favour of them, and it's ten to one they will refuse to grant it, if it happens to be the least contrary to their inclination.

Ferdinand, after a pause.—If I consent, Caroline, will you give me the kiss I have so often asked you for immediately?

Caroline.

Caroline.—Interested creature! yes; and, as a proof of my gratitude, I will give you two more than you desire.

O! woman, woman! what could'st thou not prevail on us to be! were you to use the power nature has given you over our hearts, to animate us to good, to noble deeds! what demi-gods could you make of us! But, alas! that's seldom the case;—for, when you chuse to exert your influence, it is generally either to lead us into some criminal action, or to gratify some whim, some caprice of your own, that you may laugh at our credulity, and perhaps despise us for our folly. Truly, truly, ye have corrupted and depraved the heart of many an innocent youth, who, too late, cursed your arts and his own weakness. And Solomon was in the right, when

he

he said, "More have fallen by women than by the sword."

Ferdinand was allowed the three momentary pressures of his lips, which afforded him the same degree of pleasure three drops of water would to a thirsty traveller; but, as he had received his reward, he was obliged to be muffled up as the ladies thought proper; who, as soon as they had finished the labours of the toilet, conducted him to his place of repose; and, after wishing him a good night, left him to his own reflections. He heard Caroline, in his boots, run down stairs, and Louisa trip after her: the street-door was opened, and immediately after shut and bolted, when the most perfect silence reigned in the house.

Although

Although Ferdinand's bed was of the softest down, yet to him it seemed composed of thorns; for the package he was wrapt in, and the terror the thought of his bed-fellow occasioned, made him sweat like a bull: every moment he peeped from under the covering to look if his detested companion was coming; but, for some time, his fears were vain; for it was near twelve o'clock when he heard the closet-door open, and old Ziepel enter the room.

He, as Caroline had said he would, after lighting the lamp, put out the candle in the closet; and, after walking about the room some time, examining the fastenings of the window-shutters, looking under the bed, and muttering to himself whilst he did so, laid himself by Ferdinand's side, who sincerely wished him an uninterrupted repose, and, not

to

to disturb him, crept so close to the edge of the bed, that he was in some danger of falling out of it.

But the old gentleman did not by any means rest so quietly, as the mischievous Caroline, to gain her purpose, had assured him he would, but threw himself about from one side to the other, and at last came so near to him, that poor Ferdinand trembled like an aspen-leaf, and was really almost in the agonies of death. However, he soon enjoyed a little respite; for, about one o'clock, Ziepel fell asleep; and the most harmonious music would have been less agreeable to Ferdinand's ears the remainder of the night than the sound of Ziepel's snoaring. He was now at least able to breathe freely, and hoped he should likewise be able to sleep for an hour or two; but, just as the leaden-god was

to

shaking his poppies over his eyes, the old plague awoke again, and began his movements. With them Ferdinand's terrors returned, and increased every moment:—Now he will certainly feel my shag-waistcoat, thought he—good God! he will kick against my knee-buckles—I must be detected—why did I not undress myself? O Caroline, Caroline! giddy, thoughtless woman! you know how restless he is, and yet could venture to expose yourself and me to this danger. It is true, your kisses are sweet, but not a thousand of them should bribe me to suffer the agony I now endure, or tempt me to enter this cursed bed again.

In this manner did poor Ferdinand pass this endless night, without daring to move, or hardly to draw breath;—at last, to his great joy, he heard the clock strike five.

Thank

Thank God! thought he, at least the worst and greatest part of this disagreeable business is over; in another hour, perhaps less, I shall be released.

Ziepel now seemed to be wide awake: he yawned, he stretched, and muttered something between his teeth that Ferdinand did not understand; which he, in the agony of his heart, supposed to be his morning-prayer. Afraid to move, lest his odious companion should speak to him, he lay as quiet as a mouse, and amused himself with counting the ticking of a clock there was in the room, hoping every moment the hour would strike that would put an end to this eternal night. At last the long-wished-for sound regaled his ear—day-light peeped through the chinks of the window-shutters—but Counsellor Ziepel did not seem to have the least inclination.

nation to rise. I wish a fit of the cholic would seize and drive you out of bed, thought Ferdinand, grinding his teeth.

But his wish did not seem likely to be fulfilled; for Ziepel appeared to be perfectly well, and coughed and spit as freely as if he had already swallowed his electuary and lozenges. Where are you, Caroline? I should like to know what you are doing, at the moment I am suffering almost infernal torments;—you can never repay me; nor can I ever forgive the agonies you have this night made me suffer.

Ferdinand's reflections were interrupted by the closet-door being suddenly thrown open; a person, who, by the sound of the footsteps, he knew to be a female, came running into the bed-chamber, drew up the window-curtains; and, at the moment she opened

opened the shutters, Caroline, in the most becoming undress, jumped out of bed; and placing herself by the side of Louisa, said, "I have won the ring set with your hair, Ferdinand—to-day is the first of April."

For the first and last time in his life, Counsellor Ziepel had left the side of his young wife; and the reason of his doing so was, an estate that lay contiguous to his landed property, which he had long wished to purchase, was to be sold by private contract on the first of April, which made his presence indispensably necessary on the spot. Caroline's eyes had, unknown to her husband, glanced over his papers, and gained the intelligence he wished to conceal from her; which, if he had, the farce I have just related would not have been acted. Ziepel had left home as soon as he had dined the preceding day; and

and as he stepped into the carriage, said, "Very likely I may return to-night"—thinking thereby to keep his wife in awe;—but she, as I said before, had gained more authentic information.

Caroline and Louisa burst out in the most violent fits of laughter; and their mirth was so vociferous, as to prevent their uttering a word for full five minutes. During the time they enjoyed their provoking triumph, Ferdinand lay immovable as a statue,—for surprise and rage seemed to have deprived him of sense and motion; but at last the powers of recollection returned: he started up, and whirling his dormeuse on one side, and his handkerchief on the other, endeavoured to catch hold of Caroline; she was, however, too nimble for him, and escaped with Louisa through the closet. It was well

she

she did, for otherwise it is very probable old Ziepel would have been paid in his own coin, and her peace of mind destroyed for ever, by her imprudent and too-far carried joke; for, although Caroline was incautious and thoughtless, her mind was neither depraved nor vicious.

I will not moralize, but leave my readers to draw what moral they please from this little story; for I have heard learned men, who were well acquainted with the human heart, assert, that the smallest particle of what we discover ourselves, is more useful than the largest quantity of wit or wisdom that others point out or force on us. But as my female readers will most likely have humanity enough to pity the unhappy situation we left poor Ferdinand in, I will, out of mere philanthropy, inform them of a few more particulars

particulars concerning him. He went as usual to Ziepel's in the evening—the old man was returned; but he was too much engaged with his recent purchase to pay any attention to him,—who, as every one will suppose, was sufficiently tormented by Caroline and her friend Louisa. But the trick she had played him was far from weakening his attachment; which, on the contrary, increased every time he saw her.

It was at last rewarded; for, notwithstanding the happiness the old counsellor enjoyed, the nourishing food Caroline prepared for him, and his fervent prayers for the prolongation of his life, he died before he had been married quite a year, and left his widow in possession of an affluent fortune, which she bestowed, with her hand, on Ferdinand, about six months after his death.

The young couple now thought they had attained the highest pinnacle of human happiness;—but, alas! their felicity proved of short duration; for the recollection of Caroline's imprudence soon obtruded itself on Ferdinand's mind, and robbed him of repose, and her of every domestic comfort. He became jealous and impetuous; her every action was suspected, her every look scrutinized; and before the anniversary of the first of April had twice returned, she had often, with tears, lamented her former folly. She tried every method in her power to regain the esteem of the man she really loved, and to obliterate from his mind the remembrance of the fault inconsiderateness and levity had prompted her to commit; but every attempt to regain his confidence and affection was vain; for he despised the woman who was weak enough to risk her honour and reputation

reputation for the sake of a silly jest; and her most innocent actions were construed into a repetition of the same art that had once deceived him.

Although I said I would not tease my fair readers with moral reflections, yet I cannot help concluding this story with the observation (which I hope, should any of them ever be tempted to commit an improper action, will present itself to their minds) of marriage being an excellent oculist; and that, by its aid, those faults that the lover, blinded by passion, hardly perceives, will appear as plain and distinct (perhaps as aggravated) to the clear-sighted husband, as if he viewed them through a magnifying glass.

Many things of great interest have been omitted from this edition, and the author has decided to publish them in a separate volume.

THE IDIOT.

IT was in the afternoon of a fine summer's day, that a select and cheerful society were assembled in the pleasant and cool woodbine arbour in Mr. Miller's garden; the mild breeze gently waved the red blossoms of the clover, the scarlet poppy, pale cowslip, and speckled daisy, were spread over the verdant carpet, and afforded to the eye a sweet variety; the Catherine pear glistened on the tree, and every now and then, when shaken by the wind, fell rustling in the grass, which was high enough to conceal them from the sight; the high currant and gooseberry bushes were almost

almost stripped of their refreshing fruit, their bent and leafless boughs, and the mark of recent footsteps in the mould, shewed how lately they had been plundered; but the cherry trees were in their full beauty, and bent their loaded branches, seemingly to invite the company to partake of their offered gifts, in which innumerable swarms of sparrows and finches were rioting to excess.

The minds of the company were as serene as the day;—they were all neighbours, and intimate acquaintance, except Mr. Walton, a young barrister, who had lately taken a house in the town, whose social disposition and agreeable manners made him a welcome addition to every company he chose to honour with his presence. He was admired for his sense, easy politeness, and reputed integrity, and, perhaps, most of all, for his large for-

tune; but had the company been better acquainted with him, they would have known that the external advantages he possessed were trifling, when compared to the more valuable ones of his head and heart.

The married ladies, with a scrutinizing eye, observed his every look, to discover, if possible, which was the happy female that fixed his attention most; if the unmarried fair ones, their prudent fathers' and jealous lovers' eyes were equally attentive, I cannot say; but the matron's glances were too direct to escape observation. Curiosity, particularly in matters of this kind, is justly attributed to the female sex; although, for my own part, I am far from thinking it a faulty sensation; for I naturally conclude, that she who so attentively watches the motions of others,

others, to discover by them the first spark of that flame which she supposes will end in a blaze on hymen's altar, feels the happiness of that state she is so anxious for others to enter into; and if she is content with her situation, there is no doubt of her communicating the felicity she feels to the partner of her heart; for, that those who are happy themselves, will always endeavour to make others so, is a rule without an exception.

None of Walton's attentions, nor hardly a look of his, escaped these curious observers' notice. Sometimes they thought his eyes were fixed with peculiar tenderness and expression on one person, till he directed his discourse to another, and then she was certainly the object of his pursuit;—but they were all (one excepted) mistaken; for what they supposed love, was only politeness; and

that attention every well-bred man would shew to the lady he was discoursing with. But the mistress of the house was a better judge; for she knew, by experience, that timidity and respect are always the certain signs of a beginning passion. The others only attended, on whom his eyes were fixed longest, and with the most expression; but she knew that the person to whom the timid glance is so obliquely directed, and withdrawn as soon as observed, is she who has made the deepest impression on the heart.

Except Mrs. Miller, no one had remarked the impression Charlotte Wilson had made on Walton's heart; not that she was the least calculated to inspire him with love,—for a judge of beauty would have declared her the handsomest in the circle; but, alas! she was the one who could least boast of the gifts

gifts of fortune. Charlotte Wilton was poor, at least comparatively so to the others ; and how seldom has modest merit, unattended by the adventitious advantages of rank and fortune—the power to fetter a heart. Walton's glances to her were therefore entirely disregarded, and placed to the account of the two ladies that sat on each side of her ; but, although unnoticed, he had attentively watched her every motion, and had seen, what had most likely escaped the notice of the rest of the company, that she, when she thought herself unobserved, had slipped a piece of cake into her work-bag ; her eyes met his as she drew the ribbons of the bag ; a crimson blush overspread her cheeks ; her confusion communicated itself to him ; he coloured, and was vexed with himself for looking at her at that moment, as it was evident to him his doing so had put her out of

countenance ; and long did the thought, “ Happy child that the present is intended for ! ” occupy his mind.

A few minutes after the clock struck five, Charlotte arose, and endeavoured to steal away from the company ; but, on her being observed, and asked where she was going, she said she was obliged to go home to give the maid some orders, but that she would soon return ; and she blushed as she spoke, as— as if she had been caught at prayers.

“ It’s five o’clock,” said Mrs. Miller, as soon as she was out of sight ; “ and you know that’s the time she always attends her brother.”

“ Yes ! ” and “ oh ! is that all ? ” was repeated by several voices at the same time.

Walton

Walton inquired what was the matter with her brother? and added, that he had twice before been in company with her, and now recollects that she always went away at the same hour.

Mrs. Miller, who was a distant relation of Charlotte's, and her sincere friend, was glad of the opportunity of publishing her merit, said, "Her brother is an idiot, and it is impossible," continued she, with a warmth that did honour to her heart, "to describe the gentleness and care with which she attends him, nor the kind solicitude with which she anticipates his wants and wishes;—indeed her kindness to him has often moved me to tears, and suggested the question—how few in her place would act as she does? Fourteen years has the unhappy youth been in this deplorable state; for, when he was about

six years old, soon after the death of his mother, he was deprived of his senses by that malignant disorder, the small-pox; and since that time, Charlotte (who is a year younger) has been to him mother, sister, friend, and teacher: his whole earthly happiness is centered in her—she is all he possesses and loves. Business often obliges her father, who is a very worthy man, to be absent for weeks together; and when he is at home, his various occupations afford him but little leisure to attend to his unfortunate son. The whole trouble therefore rests on her;—but never yet did I see the least shadow of harshness or unkindness in her behaviour to him, nor a word or gesture that could be construed into peevishness or discontent. She feeds and dresses him with the greatest regularity and care; and frequently, when he has been a little indisposed, have I known her put off engagements

engagements that I am certain were agreeable to her, to nurse him, which she at such times does, with an assiduity, as if the welfare of her family depended on his preservation.

"God reward her for it," exclaimed Walton, who could no longer conceal the sensations he felt—"God reward her for it! and make her as happy as she deserves to be."

And suddenly the thought darted across his mind—how blessed will the man be who calls her his! oh, that I were he! what a daughter, friend, and companion should I then be able to present to my amiable, ailing mother! how would her attentions to that worthy parent contradict the common assertion, so disgraceful to human nature, that

mothers and daughters-in-law seldom agree under the same roof.

"The gentleness and humanity with which he has ever been treated," continued the lady, "has had the most salutary effect on his mind and manners; it has made him mild and docile,—for I really believe, the usual method of treating those unhappy persons with violence, severity, and contempt, often increases their malady, and makes them more obstinate and malicious than they would otherwise be; but her example proves how far meekness and humanity can operate on the vacant mind;—and really, her attentions to him are so unremitting, that it seems to be her constant study to make up to him the loss of understanding by kindness and love. How often have I looked at her with admiration;—when, to make her instructions comprehensible

prehensible to his weak mind, she has been forced to descend almost to a level with it; and many a time have I wished a share of her patience and humility to those who have the care of educating youth. The trouble she has had with him is not to be expressed; but she is in some degree rewarded, by finding his mind, which, without her fostering care, would have been quite a blank—now not entirely so; for when he takes time to recollect himself, he often combines his ideas, and answers a question that's asked him; besides, he is so gentle and good-tempered, that it is impossible to see him without feeling the sincerest pity and commisseration for his unhappy state."

Walton.—Virtue often rewards itself;—in this case it certainly does; for his being so docile as you describe him to be, must lessen
the

the trouble he occasions;—but, good God! what an affliction must such a person be to his family.

Mrs. Miller.—A dreadful one, indeed. I have often wondered (I hope my doing so is not criminal) why there are such persons in the world, and why others, through them, are so severely punished? You look surprised, Sir—I hope I have not said any thing improper—do favour me with your opinion on the subject?

Walton.—You certainly have not said any thing improper, madam; for the wish to enlarge our ideas, or acquire knowledge, can never be wrong; but, with our utmost endeavours to do so, the degree of wisdom we are able to attain here, will be limited and trifling compared to our wishes. You honour me

me by asking my opinion, which I will give you as well as I am able; although I am fully persuaded your heart has already suggested every thing in my power to say on the subject, more forcibly than my words can do. Our chief business in this life, without doubt, ought to be, to perfectionate ourselves for a future state; and this we are certainly able to do, without comprehending the dark and hidden ways of Providence;—therefore, when any inevitable evil befalls us, that either ruffles our temper, disturbs our peace of mind, or restrains us in the ardent pursuit of that perfection we are so anxious to attain, I think we should do well, were we to endeavour to discover, if the very ill that presses us may not be useful to some; if mankind in general may not be benefited by it, or if its consequences may not be attended with salutary effects, either as precept or example

example to ourselves or others? Were we to accustom ourselves to regard misfortunes in this point of view, most of those that beset us, and I may include idiotism in the number, would afford us a useful lesson, from which we should be able to extract comfort and consolation.

Mrs. Miller.—Comfort and consolation from idiotism! I don't understand you, Sir.

Walton.—The idiot himself will, I fear, be least benefitted by them; and yet, madam, as we know this life to be but the beginning of our being, and the knowledge we acquire here, if I may be allowed the expression, but the rudiments of that we shall hereafter attain, the loss the idiot sustains is not so great as it appears on a transient glance—a moment compared to eternity; for

for his being the last here will not prevent his being, perhaps, the first in a future state; for to me it appears probable that his mind will be invigorated by its present inaction, and who knows what peculiar happiness he may then receive, by comparing his past to his present condition;—then, when every mystery will be explained, he will, doubtless, be convinced that his former situation was necessary to prevent his commission of crimes, that nothing but the alienation of reason could have hindered, which would have ended in his temporal and eternal ruin:—how glorious must the morn be to such a person, after a night of utter darkness! But the advantage such persons are to others is obvious.

Mrs. Miller.—Perhaps you mean by their having an opportunity of exercising their patience?

Walton.

Walton.—That is certainly one; but I can enumerate many others. Reason, and the uncontrolled use of our mental faculties, is certainly what exalts the man above the brute most; and to feel and know we are possessed of this valuable prerogative, is the surest method of making us act in a manner deserving of it, and of exerting those duties compatible with reason and humanity. We are too apt to think slightly, or rather not to think at all, of those external advantages we possess in common with all mankind;—the circulation of our blood, or the elasticity that sets our limbs in motion, is seldom thought of or regarded by us, for every one feels the same; and should we not fall into the same apathy with regard to our mental faculties, should we value them as they deserve, if a fool or idiot did not sometimes present themselves to us as a memento to remind us of what

what we are, and what we might have been? Never do I see such an unfortunate object without pity and commiseration; and I suppose my sensations at such times are not unlike those a farmer feels, who is interrupted at the moment he is offering a thanksgiving to heaven for a plentiful harvest, by a neighbour's coming to ask his assistance, whose hopes were blighted by lightning and hailstones. The sight of an idiot always fills my soul with awe and wonder; I admire with humility the decrees of heaven, whose ways I am persuaded are always intended for our real good, altho' often clad in mystery, and involved in darkness. But with these sensations are blended those of gratitude and philanthropy; for how is it possible to behold such a being, without feeling the wish of contributing, as much as lies in our power, towards making his dream of life as comfortable

able

able as possible ; and the best way of doing so, is that your friend has taken, of treating him with gentleness and delicacy, and not allowing him to become an object of contempt, sport, or ridicule. Thank God these sentiments are almost universal; at least I am inclined to think so, from the idiot's exciting pity sooner than any other unfortunate person; perhaps their doing so may in some measure be owing to the superstition of the vulgar, who, you know, fancy an idiot brings a blessing into their house; — but to whatever cause it may be owing, the effects are good and praise-worthy; and I really believe that even those who seem to find a pleasure in thwarting and teasing them, do it more through inconsiderateness than malice. And, to conclude, madam, for I fear I have already tired your patience, can any thing afford us a better opportunity of exerting the mild duties

duties of humanity and benevolence? the attentions we bestow on the idiot are certainly disinterested; we know he can only receive without giving, accept favours without the possibility of returning them; but he is a fellow creature, and, as such, has a right to claim our pity and assistance,—for charity never inquires who may I want? but who wants me? nor who will be useful to me? but who can I be useful to? and it is impossible to say, but that some part of your lovely friend's merit may be owing to her brother's situation;—perhaps, without such a trial, she would have been less amiable than she is.

To such of my readers, whose hearts are open to the gentle feelings of humanity, (and I am willing to hope the greatest part of them are such) I am certain I need not

apologise for the length of this discourse; for, to them, every thing that tends to the alleviation of human misery, is welcome; —perhaps I rather ought to make an excuse for the observations I have made, and omitting a number of questions that was asked and unanswered by the rest of the company; but I am unwilling to lose sight of the heroine of this tale too long.

The fineness of the evening induced the company to propose walking before supper. “I wish Charlotte was returned to go with us,” said Mrs. Miller, whose penetrating eyes seemed to have discovered every movement that passed in Walton’s mind. “Suppose,” continued she, “one of you gentlemen was to go and hurry her—will you take the trouble, Sir?”—turning to him;—“we shall walk

walk towards the grove—you will soon be able to overtake us."

Walton, eager to obey her commands, hurried away as fast as possible; and the joy he at that moment felt, was equal to that a needy person's would be, who unexpectedly finds a purse of gold: The haste he made, although not equal to his impatience, was too visible to conceal his sentiments. As Mr. Wilson's house was at no great distance, he soon arrived at it. The street-door was open: he looked about some time, expecting to see some person who could announce him; but, after waiting in vain some moments, he went in;—for the maid, who was standing in the street, at a little distance from the house, was too earnestly engaged in conversation with a female friend to observe him. The parlour-door was a-jar—he knocked at it

twice; but, on his receiving no answer, he went in. There was nobody in it; but, in a small room on the other side of it, he heard the voice of her he was in search of:—he went towards it, with the intention of presenting himself; but, before he reached the door, he suddenly stopped, unable to resist the temptation of observing and listening to her a little.

The pale youth was sitting at a table: his dress was plain, but neat, and perfectly clean: the sight was really affecting,—for it was the combination of folly and reason, infirmity and love—but the last was the predominate figure in the groupe; for, to assist and amuse the weak mind, it condescended to stoop almost to an equality with it.

“ Now

ed "Now you have ateⁿ your supper, my dear William," said she, "I'll give you something I have brought home with me for you."—"Brought home!" repeated he after her, with a vacant smile.—"Yes, here it is; (and she took the piece of cake out of her work-bag as she spoke) "and now you shall have some more nice things (taking a plate of fruit out of a closet). See, here's a fine yellow pair, and some raspberries; and only look what red cheeks these cherries have."—"Yes—red cheeks," stammered the unfortunate youth—"almost as red as yours."—"And here are some black-heart cherries;—look how large they are, and how they shine! and I'll shew you how you must eat these currants," continued she:—"Look—you must first dip them in this glass of water, so; and then you must roll them in this pounded

sugar

sugar, so. How good they are—eat them whilst I go and fetch your play-things."

She went to the other end of the room, and William ate, as one who knows no other gratification. She soon returned with some cards, and several pieces of cane, which she laid on the table.

"Look, William," said she, "what pretty things these are; you used to be very fond of them—play with them when I am gone, will you?—I'll shew you how."

And she placed the sticks in various manners;—some perpendicular, others she rolled across the table; with some she formed crosses, and, with the rest, by forcing the ends one in the other, she composed a long stick. "Now only

only think how prettily you can play with them when you are alone," said she.

William's eyes were fixed on her the whole time with an unmeaning stare, as if surprised at her wonderful operations. Charlotte sighed, and a tear started into her eye, which was raised to heaven.

Walton, unable to contain himself any longer, entered the room they were in, bowing, and, in a very confused manner, he delivered the message he was charged with.

The idiot stared; but he arose, and, in a friendly, good-natured manner, made a number of obsequious bows, as if he felt the superiority of the man of sense who stood before him. Admiration and compassion had alternately taken possession of Walton's mind during the scene he had just witnessed;

those sensations, and the manners of the unhappy youth, affected him so much, that the tears involuntarily started into his eyes. "My God!" thought he, "was I in his situation?"

And surely no sight is better calculated to move our feelings than the wonder a weak mind expresses at the advantages we possess, and modestly shrinks back on feeling his weakness and our superiority—adventitious superiority!

Walton's attention was fixed on William; he looked at him with inexpressible sorrow—

Charlotte did the same; their eyes met, and a deeper crimson tinged her cheeks; for at that moment she doubly felt the unhappiness of her brother's situation.

Sympathetic

Sympathetic minds understand each other without words; no wonder, therefore, that Charlotte's and Walton's did; for their sentiments at that moment were so entirely harmonised, as to unite their hearts for ever.

He begged Charlotte would allow him the honour of conducting her to the company; they went,—but Walton's thoughts were too much engaged with what he had so lately seen, to allow him to talk of any thing else. He assured her of the admiration and respect her conduct had inspired him with: she thanked him for his politeness, but wondered he found any thing extraordinary in it.

"How is it possible to act otherwise than I do?" said she; "he is my brother, and (with a sigh) few are the comforts he is able to enjoy, and fewer are those he desires,—

for he is indeed very easily satisfied. Besides, I must really be ungrateful if I did not love him,—for his attachment to me is greater than you can suppose, his unfortunate situation would allow him to feel;—for you cannot think how he rejoices when I return after a short absence, nor the pleasure the veriest trifle presented by me gives him; and I assure you, the satisfaction he at such times expresses, always communicates itself to me."

"The delicacy of your sentiments, madam," replied Walton, looking at her with admiration, "does infinite honour to your heart, and has likewise the advantage of enabling you to support, without repining or impatience, the trouble he must undoubtedly occasion you."

"It

"It is true," replied she, "that my brother's infirm state often makes the assistance of others necessary; but God forbid I should be impatient! I have ever made it a rule to act in a manner towards him, not to fear his calling me to account, should he ever recover his senses."

"Have you any hope of his recovering them?" said Walton.

"Not in this world," replied she—"but certainly in the next; for I have no doubt of the faculties a cruel disorder deprived him of here being restored to him in heaven—I often comfort myself with the thought."

Walton's answer was short and unconnected: he pressed her hand to his heart—that heart was now entirely filled with the wish

wish of calling her his, whose way of thinking so entirely corresponded with his own. He designedly led her a longer way than was necessary to join the company, that he might have the satisfaction of discovering more of her sentiments; and the more her mind unfolded itself to his view, the more his passion increased; and the effects of it were too visible not to be remarked by the company as soon as they returned to them; and they, without possessing the spirit of divination, soon guessed the meaning of the young man's looks and attentions.

Indeed they were so plain, that one must have been blind not to have perceived them.

Mrs. Miller sat opposite her friend at table, and more than once gave her a private and approving nod.

After

After supper, before the company went away, they took a few turns in the garden. Mrs. Miller drew Charlotte aside, and said, "I wish you joy of your conquest, child—Walton is in love with you."

Charlotte silently and confusedly returned the pressure of her friend's hand; but the tell-tale moon shone too bright to conceal the glow on her cheeks.

"How agitated you are, and how you blush," continued Mrs. Miller. "Well, I'll go and send Walton to compose you"—and away she tript.

At that moment the company separated; and Walton, who had been studying some time how he should seemingly, by chance, contrive to conduct Charlotte home, thought this

this a good opportunity of offering his service. His arm was accepted, and they went away together; but if their doing so had entirely the appearance he wished, I cannot say,—for a smile was visible on many countenances.

"What purpose can delay answer?" thought he, as soon as they were alone; "her heart is still disengaged; (he had, with affected indifference, or at least what he intended to seem so, asked her friend if it was; but Walton's heart was too honest to act an hypocritical part) but who can assure me that another may not, before to-morrow, discover what a treasure she is, and rob me of her? I had better speak to her now."

He endeavoured to do so; but, at a loss in what manner to begin, he remained silent till they

they were within sight of her house. No time was therefore to be lost; he hem'd several times, but was always at a loss how he should properly introduce the subject. Charlotte had asked him several questions without having received any answer to them; and perceiving the agitation he was in, (for he trembled excessively) was just going to ask him if he was ill, when he seized her hand, kissed and pressed it to his heart.
"Ah, madam!" said he, "could I but properly explain the sentiments I feel for you, and flatter myself with the hope of not being quite indifferent to you!"
Charlotte was silent, but her heart palpitated violently.

"Say, most amiable of your sex," continued he—"tell me if I dare aspire to your love?"

Charlotte

Charlotte, in a trembling, inarticulate voice, assured him of her esteem and friendship.

"Esteem and friendship," replied he, "are, in my opinion, but other names for love;—for the present, therefore, I will be content to call you my best, my dearest friend, but which appellation I hope you will soon allow me to exchange for the dearer one of wife."

Charlotte wished to answer him; but her agitation was so great, that she could not articulate a word.

"I will not distress you now," continued he—"only permit me to dream of my happiness. When do you expect Mr. Wilson home?

home? As soon as he returns, have I your permission to visit him? and only tell me what I must do to deserve and gain your heart?"

Charlotte withdrew her hand from his; and as she ran into the house, said, in a low voice, " Speak to my father, Sir."

Charlotte wife of sir william parr
and blue ribbon
FINIS